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श्रीदुर्गाजी

HIMALAYAN CULTURE

Vol. IV, No. 1, May - August 1998

Inside :

- Rana Tharu Marriage Practices
- Listing of Documents from Mājh Kirāt
- Nepali Muslim Minority
- जातीय सङ्गीतशास्त्र
- Book Review

स्वस्ति श्रीमन्महाराजाधिराजश्रीश्रीश्रीरुक्का
आगे इदकोसीवाहाडुरापूर्वम्रुनपश्चिम्माऊकिरातभरम्अम्वलका — प्रोहित
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लगरिदिनु तहसीलगर्नआउन्याकंपकावहिदारजिम्मादारहुद्वासीपाहिमा
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प्रजाहरागरिहुलाकमाथीकाहदामरछालासबैषासमेगजीनदाबीलगरी
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मीतीकार्तिकशुदि १४ रोज ८ शुभम्

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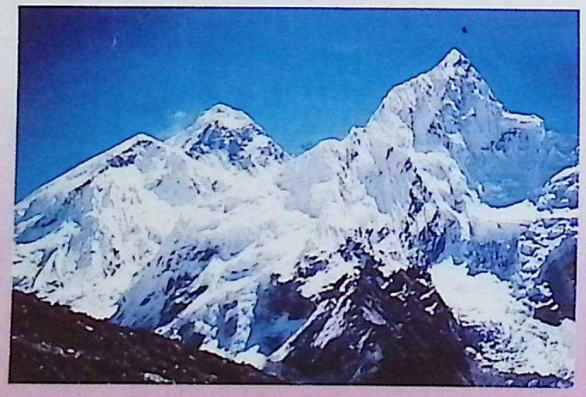

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To,
Mr. Kumar Pandey.
with best wishes.
H.B. Kirant
Sept. 5, 1998.

HIMALAYAN
CULTURE

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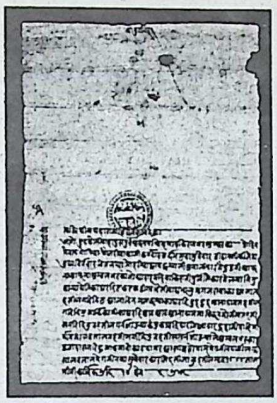

Cover : A royal decree relating to a tax on hunting in Mājh Kirāt

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Editorial

A break in continuity of Himalayan Culture has been an unpleasant event. It has extremely affected the journal, its contributors and well-wishers alike. Especially, after the revival of democracy in Nepal, there needs good reason for Himalayan Culture to apprise the readers of newfound facts on the multifaceted traits of Nepali culture.

Present issue includes indigenous Kirātas or Kirāntis, Tharus and Muslim minority of whom not much work has been carried out by the Nepali scholars. While Muslim minorities in the middle hilly regions have failed to maintain much of the ingenious Islamic tenets, the Muslims living in terai have been successful in preserving them due to their proximity with the Indian Muslims. Islamic art and terminology too, have found full expression in everyday life and legal system of the country. The Tharus are no exception. They are hard-pressed between the hill migrants from north and the Indians from south, compelling to adopt some non Tharu traits in their culture and life style. A thorough study of the ancient Kirātas has been an urgent need.

Himalayan Culture will also entertain constructive criticism based on facts of the related subjects from readers and scholars.

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A Study of the Marriage Practices among the Rana Tharus of Nepal

Dr. Ramesh Raj Kunwar

The way of life of people is one thing, what we study and write about, is another dimension of culture. The former is reality, the latter our understanding of the same. If the former is to be called culture, than the latter may be called only culture-construct.

— Ralph Linton

A lot of works have been done on the Tharus by Indian anthropologists (Majumdar, 1944; Srivastava, 1958) who confined their works only to the Tharus of Indian side. Similarly, many foreign anthropologists (Mc Doughal, 1968; McDonaugh: 1984; Krauskopff: 1987) confined their studies to the Tharus of Dang district of western Nepal. Nepali anthropologists like Rajaure (1977) also studied in the same district, and sociologist Pyakuryal (1982) did study on the Tharus of Chitwan district of Nepal. Besides anthropologists and sociologist, some native Tharus like Singh (1988) and Panjiyar (1993) have also written some articles following retrospective model which is a kind of idea development in the context of the Tharu history. In the context of Rana Tharus of Nepal, Oskar and Gurung (1996) have carried out studies on some aspects of the Rana Tharus of Kailali. But no depth study has been done so far on the Rana Tharus of Kailali and Kanchanpur district of the far western region of Nepal. Therefore, this researcher decided to make a comparative study of the Rana Tharus of Kanchanpur and other Tharus of Nepal and India. The main objective of studying this subgroup of the Tharu community is to know whether they are squeezed from both hill-migrants and Indian Hindus, how far bonded labour has been institutionalized in their community and to know how far they have maintained their original cultural tradition of Nepal and India.

The group selected for the study is the Rana Tharus of Kanchanpur district of far western Nepal which is 725 km away from Kathmandu, the capital city of Nepal. The area was visited in 1989, 1991, 1992, 1993 and 1994 for short time. Altogether, this researcher spent 8 months in different Tharu villages of Bardiya, Kanchanpur, Dang, Deukhuri Valley, Nawal Parasi, Chitwan, Morang and Sunsari. In the course of collecting the data, both the etic and emic versions were also recorded by the researcher. However, the recorded versions are judged through pros and cons method. An effort has been made to cover the both overt and covert aspects of culture of this community. This is largely based on synchronic approach supported by diachronic study. In many cases, the nomothetic inquiry is also made for

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certain acceptance of factual propositions. The study was based on both phenomenal as well as ideational observations. However, participant observation was the tool of this kind of study. Methodologically, this aspires to be empirical.

The Tharus are one of the important ethnic groups of Nepal. This community can be found elsewhere in the southern part of terai of Nepal and northern part of Bihar and Uttar Pradesh of India. In the context of Nepal, the distribution of Tharu population in Western terai (Banke, Bardiya, Kailali and Kanchanpur) is 476,373. In central terai (Kapilvastu, Rupandehi and Nawalparasi), their number is 173,006. In the west of Bagmati river, their population is 103,911. Between Bagmati and Kamala river (Sarlahi, Mohotari, Dhanusa), it is recorded at 20,590. Between Kamala and Koshi river (Siraha and Saptari) the number is 82,257. Particularly, in the Saptari district their population is 61,640. In the east of Koshi river (Sunsari, Morang, Jhapa), the recorded number is 145,070. The total population of the Tharus of Nepal is 1001,207 (Gurung and Salter, 1996:207). While in Uttar Pradesh of India, according to the census of 1981, they are 83,381 in number (Hasanain, 1990:95). There are several indigenous subgroups of Tharus, such as Dangaura, Kochila, Kathariya, Mech, Rana and Deshauri. The terai region, which is in the tropical section of the country has a hot humid climate. Srivastava (1958:133) noted that the 'Tharus are a Mongoloid people or predominately so, who have successfully assimilated non-Mongoloid physical features as well'. Their language is influenced from Audhi, Bhojpuri, Urdu, Maithili, Bengali and Hindi. They use two terms while giving their identity to insiders and outsiders which is used here by autonym i.e. 'Tharwa' and exonym i.e. 'Tharu'. Locally the Tharu habitat is known as Tharuwan or *Tharhot*. McDonaugh (1988:23) on the ground of local dialect of the Tharus of Dang, interprets the word 'Tharu' as 'husband' and 'man' as opposed to woman. The local term for 'man' in generic sense, is *manai* or *manaiya* a derivative of Sanskrit term *manu* (=man), but it is possible that the word 'Tharu' may have had wider meaning at one time and thus come to be applied to the group as a whole. This phenomenon, of course is, widespread and occurs relatively among Austro-Asiatic speaking Ho and Munda tribes, for instance (McDonaugh, 1988).

Long ago, they were the hunters and gatherers group but now they have

Photo : Dr. Ramesh Raj Kunwar

The Rana Tharu women in their traditional attire. The author (second from left)is seen in the traditional Rana Tharu male costume.

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become settled agriculturist (Pyakuryal, 1982). Judging by their existing material culture, the oral tradition and simple life-style, they still have characteristic of the earliest times. They have settled down near by the forest and its interior part. They have close relationship with supernatural forces or spirit of the nature or world. The Rana Tharus practice community endogamy and *kurma* and *meet* (ritual friendship) exogamy. *Kurma* is a word which is used by the Tharus to denote 1. a group of agnates, and 2. each such relation individually (Mathur, 1967:35). Joint family is the dominant system. The Rana Tharu villages generally comprises 30 to 1000 houses. Mostly the villages are formed by the heterogeneous subgroup of the Rana Tharus. The houses generally stand from north to south facing east. The house in a single storeyed building, 20 to 60 ft. in length and 20 to 24 ft. wide. The shape of the house is rectangular and normally seems dark inside the house. They do not have much utensils in the kitchen. Their staple food is rice. Fish is considered as an integral part of their food. If there is no fish they take rice with hot spiced vegetable dish. The women wear colourful dresses (Kunwar, 1997). This trait identifies the Rana Tharus of Nepal. Both man and woman love to drink locally distilled *daru* or liquor. They do not ferment *jand* as is the case with the Dangaura Tharus of western Nepal.

Regarding the family size of the Tharu, in one Dangaura Tharu family of Pipladi village of Kanchanpur, 84 members shared the same kitchen and living room. The main characteristic of this community is joint family system which helps to maintain discipline in the family. In the largest joint family of Pancha Rana of Pipri village consisted 75 members, whereas 70 members were found in the family of Hari Rana of Kanj village in Kanchanpur district. The average size of the Rana Tharu family consists of 20 to 45 members who share the same kitchen and living room. The subsistence is based on farming and herding. A few Rana Tharu men have become landless and work as *kamaiya* or bonded labour to their masters for indefinite period. Hill migrants robbed the Tharu of their lands and enticed them into debt and eventual slavery (Sattaur, 1993:46).

Though the Rana Tharus observe number of festivals, *hori* (=*holi*: a colourful Hindu festival observed by the Tharu in different way) is considered as one of the important festivals which falls in February and last for the whole month. Both, unmarried and married girls, who do not have children, participate freely in this festival. If the unmarried girls become pregnant during the festival, they are also accepted by the society. This is the only community where the women enjoy freedom at least for a month during hori every year.

The Rana Tharus are partly spiritists and partly Hindus. They believe in the supernatural forces and are always dependent on the *bharra* or shaman who can diagnose and heal the sick people through the power of oracle. Several cases of snake bite in the monsoon season have been cured by the *bharra* in the Rana Tharu community and *guruva* in the Dangaura Tharu community. If he appeases the local spirits, he can also suppress the evil forces of the county. All different *kurma* and sub clan of the Rana Tharus have different unseen spirit deities.

The Rana Tharus are guided by a prelate tradition. The Rana Tharu women appear to be more forward than the Dangaura Tharu women even

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though their society is still unexposed. Their sincerity and honesty is highly appreciated by the non-Tharus of Nepal. These days, the Rana Tharus are undergoing a process of rapid transformation. The other exogamous forces are also equally at work to bring about cultural change in this community. There is a clash between the younger and older generations. The educated young husbands seem frustrated with their uneducated wives and their traditional living style. They are hastily adopting the stronger culture of Indian side and the middle Hindu hill culture of Nepal.

Clan

The Lampuchhuwa Tharus of Morang and Sunsari are divided into numbers of *pad* or clans. The clans are as follows: Gachhedar, Sardar, Tabedar, Chaudhari, Majhi, Biswas, Bhagat, Mandal, Kangoi, Madhar, Mirgha, Modi and Khan. The Gahirodiya Tharus of Bachhauli and Bankattha villages of Chitwan (from Narayani river to Sukra Nagar) consists of Banjara, Rawut, Pawe, Bantar, Khausiya, Tharbot, Mahot, Gorat and Musihar clans. Similarly, the Dangaura Tharus of Dang are divided into numbers of clans such as Pachhal Dangya (two types), Dahit (ten types) Darya Dong, Damen Daura, Sukhlaurya, Katkatuwa, Gamuwa (two types), Ultihawa (seven types) Karyomaghariya, Satagaunwa, Danuwa, Ratgainya, Thar jyogi, Thar bahun, Ghat chorwa, Nun bauwa, Karya angrahuwa, Dargainya, Lotihawa, Toldehawa (four types), Bhedai Kusumaha, Kurrehawa and Badhhawa. Though there are several clans among the Deshauri Tharus of Bardiya, only two clans like Hardeula and Rajbansi were recorded in Mainapokhari village. The Deukhoriya (Pipari Village) Tharus are also divided into number of clans. The clans are Bhathanihane (Kusumya), Ballahane, Phantahawa, Garhwane, Pachahane, Chilrahane (Dangaha), Chhingatpurane (Drum beater). Parashpurane, Paharane (Kusumya), Sadgainya, Radgainya, Dahit, Dukrihawa, Jupahane, Bankatahane, Bhainskormahane, Khon, Bhanpurane, Pachhaldangya, Obrahane and Ghumanehane. There are only Kumhal Tharus living across the Rapti river in Deukhori valley particularly in Gobardiya and Gadhawa villages. The Lalpuriya Tharus of Nawalpur (Gaindakot to Tamashpur) have also several clans like Gurau, Mahatto, Chaudhari, Khojwar, Panjiyar, Thanet, Thar bot, Thar Kumhal and

Photo : Dr. Ramesh Raj Kunwar

The Rana Tharu groom and bride in wedding apparel.

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Pan bot. In Jammuwad village of the same district, only Rautar clan was found among the Lakol Tharus in the western part of Nawalpur. The Rana Tharus as an independent community are divided into a number of clans such as the Rana, Gadhaura, Mahattam, Badaek, Rawot, Bisaina, Battha, Rao, Dhangara, Jugiya, Khunka, Pasiya, and Saunsa. Though this community is not strongly stratified, they are socially divided into four sub groups i.e. i. Rana, Mahattam, Rao, and Battha; ii. Gadhaura; iii. Badaek and Rawot; and iv. Dhangara, Jugiya, Khunka and Pasiya. So far as the marriage rules and regulations are concerned, the first groups are not permitted to get married with all three sub groups. Similarly the second group, the Gadhauras do not join in marriage with any of the three sub groups. The Gadhaura as being the sacred thread wearer and alcohol avoider has higher social status than the others. The third sub groups are considered as the pseudo-clan descended from *pahadi* (hill) migrants. The fourth sub groups are considered as lower in status.

Marriage

Marriage is considered as one of the important social institutions which plays an important role in establishing family kinship and social ties. Therefore, marriage is recognized as an important structural element of the society. In order to be the full fledged member of one's own society, marriage is a must. This is also one of the rites of passage. In many a societies, people have followed the practice of seeking a mate outside one's own group because it links people into a wider social network that protects them in times of need. This exogamy pushes social organization outward and helps to establish alliances among groups in contrast to endogamy which dictates marriage within a specific group to which one belongs. Although most cultures are endogamous units, the unstratified societies have followed both exogamic and endogamic rules.

Though marriage is very important in all communities, the Rana Tharus take it as 'impermanent' relationship as the wife can leave her husband at any time. There can be found a high rate of elopement in this community. The elopement cases are found mostly before giving birth to the first child, and very few cases of elopement occur after giving birth to the child. In their view, the offering of bride to groom, is the symbol of 'religious gift', 'cow gift', and 'food gift'. This reveals that the ideology has been borrowed from Indian and Nepali hill Hindus. It is also found that the Tharus are gradually adopting some Hindu traditions. The Rana Tharus are considered as superior group to the Dangaura Tharus, a subgroup said to have emigrated from Dang valley. Traditionally, they practice exogamy and *kurma* (=a group of agnates) exogamy. Endogamous marriage is followed by all Tharu subgroups. Marriage with *dilbar* (=male ritual friend) and *gunj* (=female ritual friend) is not permitted in this community. These days, due to frequent contact with the Dangaura and the hill migrants, the Rana Tharu girls have started making elopement with the Dangaura Tharus and *pahadi* men. In Sisaiya village, three Rana Tharu girls were found to have eloped with the Dangaura boys. Similarly, the Rana Tharus have also married Dangaura Tharu girls. It is recorded that five Rana Tharu boys of Sisaiya village have married the Dangaura girls, and four examples have been recorded in Badi Daiji village. One Rana Tharu girl of

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Sisaiya got married with one *pahadi* who belonged to Sunar occupational group. There were several examples of intermarriage between the *pahadi* and the Dangaura Tharu in this district. This is also recorded in Lalpur, Basantapur, Bhansi, Mandirpur, Mahuliya, Bhagatpur and Ainthpur villages of the same district. After making elopement, the ritual, *pat dalne* is performed by the husband's side for the purpose of legalizing the newly brought wife into the community. The marriage between Rana Tharu and *pahadi* can also be seen in Dekhatbhuli village. In this village, mostly the Rana Tharu boys have married *pahadi* girls. In the case of elopement, no wedding ritual is required. Till 1989, there was no cultural contact between the Dangaura and the Rana Tharus. The Rana Tharu men will not dare to visit the house of the Dangaura Tharus because they fear that the Dangaura women are magic specialists and if offended they can take out eyes and testicles of the offenders through their magic power. For this reason, marriage does not take place between the Rana Tharu men and the Dangaura women. But now the scenario has changed.

Though polygamous marriage is not common among the Rana Tharus, there can be found three cases in Asaina, Daiji and Sisaiya villages of Kanchanpur district. Polygamous marriage is locally known as *chhaigudiya* which literally means 'two legs of husband and four legs of two wives'. Cross-cousin marriage is not practised by them. The relation between husband and wife can easily be broken. The wife leaves her husband without any prior information. Barrenness is completely disliked by this community. If barrenness after marriage continues for four or five years the union might be broken, and each one is free to get remarried in his or her own clan.

Newly born male child is highly loved by them. They strongly believe that the male child receives elderly treatment which is not possible for the girl child. They express that the daughter are given in marriage to the other's son, whereas the son stays at his own home. This reveals that the Rana Tharu society is also male dominated society.

Socially, a Rana Tharu's life is divided into two parts: life before marriage and life after. It is said that he or she is changed from 'two legs' to 'four legs' meaning husband and wife together. In the first stage, the boy will not have any responsibility at home and in the second stage he should take many responsibilities. Therefore, after his marriage he has to spend hard life in the coming days.

Economically, marriage is considered as a big 'burden'. Although a lot of money is spent on marriage, it does not guarantee lasting relationship. Marriage as an impermanent institution, one informant regretfully expresses that the union could easily be broken and economic expenses seemed of no use. They often express that they have to get married 'twice'. This is the reason why they do not consider the marriage as one of the important events of life. But it does not mean that all the household follow their marriage twice. Nor does it mean that they do not think marriage is not quintessential of the society. They also know that union of husband and wife is a major event of family in that they re-establish this relation, despite the failure of the first marriage.

Child Marriage

Child marriage is common in this community. In 1991, many young Rana

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Tharu boys raised their voice to stop this tradition. But the older generation did not listen to their voice and followed the same tradition. Child marriage is one of the important factors of elopement in this community. The age variation is another factor of elopement. The young educated males consider the early child marriage a big social problem in their community.

By tradition, the betrothal ceremony, *magani*, is performed in the early age of both boy and girl. This is considered as the first phase of marriage in the Rana Tharu community. This ceremony is also a kind of bondage between the boy and girl for their future union as husband and wife. This ritual prevent them from getting married with others. However, the aspect of elopement is quite a different phenomenon. Though *magani* confirms them to be the future husband and wife, there will be no meeting between the boy and girl until final wedding. Although *magani* is settled, the girl and the boy still fall in love with another partners which finally enforces them to leave their betrothed partners. This might well happen even after final wedding. The practice of elopement has become their another social problem. One female informs that the tradition of early settlement of marriage *magani*, is not good for them. But this view is a little different from the view given by young boys in 1991. Intrinsically, elopement is not liked by the parents of both sides. If the tie of union is broken, the parents are offended because the neighbours start gossiping and make fun of it. In case of death after *magani*, there will be no problem in getting married with new mate. In such a situation, it is very difficult to find a new mate because of the prevailing *magani* system in which one is already betrothed in the early age. This is also one of the justifications for elopement among the Dangaura Tharus.

Elopement and the Role of Juliya

How do the girls make elopement? A mediator known as *majpatiya* plays an important role in establishing matrimonial relationship between the two sides who is appreciated by all. But, on the other side, there is found another institution in which *juliya*, a broker plays an equally important role. The broker's role is always to break down the relation between the husband and wife. Anyone can be a *juliya* in the villages. The role played by *juliya* is not known by the others except the concerned individuals - either the new husband or wife or the group or their parents. If the relation is to be broken, the *juliya* starts reporting the bride's parents that their daughter is having trouble at her husband's house. She is ill behaved by her mother-in-law:... that she is forced to work hard everyday and her husband is also engaged with another girl... etc. This makes the bride's parents worried and at the same time angry. After studying their psychology, the *juliya* proposes an alternative which is finally accepted by the parents. Naturally, the parents seem to be worried about the future of the daughter. If the parents are convinced by the *juliya*, the parents themselves can approach *juliya* to search for a suitable partner for their daughter. At the same time, the *juliya* will be reporting the groom's parents that their daughter-in-law is gradually losing her character and she often goes to see movie with her new boy friend... and her parents also do not like her husband's family.... Finally, this situation enforces both the sides to break relation with each other. Thus, the *juliya* succeeds in creating

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complete misunderstanding between the three concerned groups i.e. the bride's parents, groom's parents and daughter-in-law. Then the groom's parents also approach the *juliya* to ask him to search for a suitable mate for their son. On this, the *juliya* makes search for a new mate. A *juliya* receives Rs. 1500 to 2000 as his or her working fee from both sides. Before making elopement, some plan is made either at homestead in the night, or at the time of other's wedding day, or on the festive occasion or in the market place. Through this secret arrangement of *juliya* the daughter-in-law leaves her husband's house at mid night. Sometimes, the groom's parents seem unaware of this development because the *juliya* works only from one side. In this case, the groom's parents try to bring her back for the purpose of identifying who the *juliya* was in the village. If the *juliya* is identified, the villagers shun him or her. Sometimes, the role of *juliya* is played by any male or female member of one's sub kin-group. The institution of *juliya* has also become another social trouble in this community.

Marriage by elopement among the Rana Tharus is called *urairi* in India and *udhara udhari* in Kanchanpur district of Nepal. *Udhara* is he who has brought other's wife and *udhari* is she who has left her husband and eloped with another man. The main reason of elopement is either sexual dissatisfaction due to age variation, or poor economic condition of the household. This type of marriage takes place either through the effort of boy friend or the broker. Many informants report that the boys take the girls to India for a few days. If they have run off to India, the girl's relatives can not find them immediately. This is also a kind of advantage (or disadvantage ?) taken by the people of the border area. After spending few days in India they come back to the village. Then, the husband informs the neighbours that he has brought another man's wife. By tradition, the husband has to give a feast to the villagers. The feast is known as *hora khuwaune*. The purpose of the feast is to seek help from the villagers because he fears that the former husband and his group might come to quarrel with him. After taking food, the villagers also show their allegiance to him. Soon, a message is sent to the former husband's house through a *chakar*, or a village volunteer. As per the message, the *chakar* reports that so and so's wife has come to the village therefore, her former husband is requested to visit the new husband and take marriage compensation, *jari*. Upon hearing this, the former husband's man and his group prepare themselves to take a fight with the new husband and his group. Such kind of group is known as *jhidaga* who are supposed to quarrel with the new husband and his men. The village elders, *Pancha* (Lit. the five elderly village representatives) try to settle the quarrel between the groups by suggesting that reasonable compensation of the previous marriage be made to the former husband. The *pancha* then decide that the new husband has to pay a fine Rs. 5,000 as marriage compensation, *jari* to the former husband. By tradition, the former husband will get Rs. 4,500 and rest of the amount Rs. 500 goes to the *pancha* and the amount is spent on entertainment. If the negotiation takes place in an amicable way, both sides entertain themselves together. This entertainment brings harmony between the quarrelling groups. During the fieldwork, one informant reminded the case of Govinda Rana of Sama Daiji

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who was married at twelve. But four years after marriage, the wife left him. Later, the parents of Govinda Rana came to know her new home. They decided to bring her back for the sake of maintaining their social prestige. She was brought back but again she did the same. Finally, his parents decided to take Rs. 5,000 as marriage compensation from the new husband; later on the *jari* was paid to Govinda Rana. Similarly, Kalidas Rana of Badi Daiji village took Rs. 5,500 from the new husband of his wife. Moli Rana paid Rs. 7,800 to his wife's former husband of Kaluwapur village. Rajia Rana brought another man's wife and paid Rs. 4,000 to her former husband. Mahadev Rana also brought wife from Bichuwa village and paid Rs. 1,600. In like manner, Khadero Rana brought wife from Sisaudandi village and paid Rs. 600 to her former husband.

In this community, if the betrothed girl makes elopement with her boy friend before her final wedding, the parents of both sides want to take her back. They at once do not want to take compensation because marriage is economically quite expensive and to arrange a second marriage is almost impossible because of prevailing *magani* system. The reason of bringing her back home is to give a chance to improving herself for atleast two times. If she makes elopement thrice, she is insulted by the former husband's group. Such type of girl becomes the subject of dispute *jhidaga* between the two parties. The way of bringing the eloped wife back to the former husband's house is called *chilhariya naach naach ke lyaye hen*. If the new husband does not pay *jari* and she is caught by her former husband or his group in the village of new husband, her two hands are tied to a bamboo stick and made naked. People mock at her saying *chilhariya* (=eagle). According to their belief, when she is bitterly insulted by her former husband and the villagers, she does not dare to leave her husband again. When the group arrives at the house of her husband, a *jhidaga ko hatkanna* ritual is performed to purify her in which the villagers are offered feast. In the feast, she offers butter to all. This act symbolizes that she has been purified and agreed to live as member of their community. This also indicates that water and food from her hand is acceptable by the community. Though this case was studied only in Jhilmila and Chaunni villages, the informant recently reported that the same case was recorded in Sama Daiji, Bade Daiji and Sishaiya villages of Khanchanpur.

Types of Marriage

The Rana Tharus follow seven types of marriage. The first type is locally known as *bariyatwalo bya* which is generally arranged by the parents. In this type, many rituals are performed for the purpose of getting full fledged social recognition in the society. The second type of marriage is known as *dola* or *ladhiya ladangwa bya*. This is popular in India. The nature of this type is economically oriented because the bride's father is not in a position to spend money for his daughter's marriage instead, he proposes bride's price. If the proposal is agreed by the boy's parents the marriage is performed. There are two reasons of following this practice; one being the bride's father economically poor, another, the girl is looked upon as unchaste. Previously, the bride's price was minimum Rs. 400 to maximum Rs. 1,500 but now a days, her parents may demand Rs. 4,000 or Rs. 5,000 and some amount of grains.

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The third type of marriage is known as *uthauwa bya*. Though this is similar to the first type, the difference is the distance of location of the bride's house. If the location is very far from the groom's house, the groom's party goes to the bride's village earlier and from there it proceeds to the bride's house. After completing the whole ritual, the wedding party goes back to the groom's house. This is followed only for convenience to the groom's party. The fourth type of marriage is called *badhar bya*. This is considered as an expensive type of marriage. This type of marriage is also concerned with the distance but not exactly the same way as the third type. If the wedding party arrives from long distance (2-3 days walk), the bride's side will not send them away after completing the ritual instead, the groom's party is requested to stay one more day at the house. Naturally the host has to serve extra food and drink to their guests. These days, the scenario has changed due to the construction of highways, country and cart roads. The Tharus are also gradually leaving this tradition. The fifth type of marriage is called *chutkata* and *randuwa bya*. In the *chutkata* type, the marriage takes place between the widower and the widow. According to their understanding, the widower lives at the widow's house where he accepts her children in case she has any from her former husband. This type of marriage was observed in Padau village of Kanchanpur. In this marriage the ritual is not performed but, *hatkanna* or a feast is arranged for the villagers. In the *randuwa* type marriage, the widow along with her children goes to the widower's house. Their children are called *lehangiya* which means the children who followed their mother by catching her *lehanga* or dress. Legally, her children from former husband can not claim their step-father's property. This type of marriage was observed in Sama Daiji village of Kanchanpur. In the long run, if the step-father wants to give his property to his step son or daughter, he can do it. The sixth type of marriage is known as *deurate bhaujaiya bya*. This is a kind of levirate marriage. This type of marriage was witnessed in Badi Daiji and Sama Daiji villages. The seventh type of marriage is called *bigadaidha bya*. In this type, the boys and girls are engaged during the time of *hori* (Kunwar, 1997: 94-105) festival. If the girl becomes pregnant, she can get married with the same boy, even though they have already come to an agreement with other partners through *magani* ritual. This type of marriage is called *bigar* in India.

On asking about marriageable age, many informants opined that they do not care about the age. Many boys and girls are married at the age of 12,15,17 and 20. Fourteen marriages were observed in the studied area, out of which, nine wives were 3 to 5 years senior to their husbands in age. This is one of the factors of elopement. Though this is realized as a problem, the parents still follow this tradition. They believe that the aged wife can work hard at home and field. On making study of the same community in India, Majumdar (1944:97) found cases of adult marriages in several villages. He stressed that the shift of child marriage has resulted from their contact with caste Hindus. But twenty five years later, Mathur (1967:35) found the child marriage practice at the same place. His study revealed that the average age of married male was twelve or thirteen. The idea lies in the fact that the girls should be married off before menstrual period (twelve to fourteen years), or immediately after it. Srivastava (1957) has also found the

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same case but he writes that early marriage provides a safeguard against premarital sexual relationship with other boys. Though the Tharus of Kanchanpur perform betrothal, *magani* in early age, they do not think of a safeguard against premarital sexual relationship among them. Nor do they marry before menstrual period as mentioned by Mathur. According to their tradition, the betrothal ceremony is performed at an early age between 1 to 5. This ritual confirms them to be the wife and husband. After this ceremony, they are not socially allowed to come in contact with each other till the final wedding is performed. Generally, the final wedding is performed between 12 years period after the betrothal ceremony. During this gap, both boy and girl might fall in love with their girl and boy friends. The traditional Tharu community prefer to arrange final wedding ceremony at sixteen to twenty years of age, which is called *jaman* (Lit.: adult) meaning he is matured enough to look after his wife. However, this researcher could not find this tenet being followed by all in the studied area. On the other hand, many betrothed girls also become *jaman* even older than their future husbands. For instance, in one marriage, the wife was sixteen years old whereas her husband's age was only 10. It was also recorded that the four girls and boys got married at the age of 16 and 18 while seven girls aged 16 to 17 got married to young boys whose age were between 12 to 14 years. This reveals that the Rana Tharus are still following child marriage system. However, younger generation do not want to continue this tradition. The nature of child and adult marriage tradition prevalent in Kanchanpur district of Nepal differ from that of the marriage tradition of the Tharus' of India (Majumdar, 1938, 1994; Srivastava, 1957 and Mathur, 1967: 33-46).

Wedding Time

So far as marriage season is concerned, many Tharus prefer to arrange marriage in the winter season (between mid-December and mid-January) when they have free time from agricultural work. Now a days, few people have started arranging marriages in April arguing that the winter season (December and January) is cold season and the host has to have a lot of firewood for the wedding party. During April, the wedding party need not carry their heavy bedding along with them. Moreover, they do not have much agricultural work load in this season. It was recorded that two families of Sama Daiji village arranged marriage in the month of April.

The Process of Marriage

By tradition, a mediator called *majpatiya*, is needed to settle the marriage. Accordingly, a marriage proposal from the boy's side is sent to the girl's parents through a *majpatiya*. After visiting girl's house, the *majpataya* will also visit the girl's consanguineal and affinal kin groups to confirm whether matrimonial relation in between the groups can be established or not. This act is known as *ghunga ko jar*. If everything is approving, the *majpatiya* proposes for marriage. If this is accepted by the girl's parent, a betrothal ceremony, *magani* is performed. *Magani* ritual performed in mid-April to mid-June, is a kind of social bondage which confirms the marriage between the proposed boy and girl.

There also exists a tradition of performing the betrothal ceremony during pregnancy period. If the woman

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Photo : Dr. Ramesh Raj Kunwar

Bharra, the prelate and Shaman.

of both sides give birth to two opposite sexes, marital relationship between newly born babies can be established but, in the case of same sexes only ritual friendship is established. In order to perform *magani*, the boy's party visit the girl's house carrying some amount of sweetmeat and few bottles of *daru* (liquor). If this is accepted and consumed by the girl's parents and relatives, the boy's side again send some presents to the girl's house for three times before final wedding takes place. In the first process, two basketful of bread is sent to the girl's house. The cost is estimated Rs. 600 in 1989. In the second process, one basket of *julebi* (sweetmeat) is sent which costs approximately Rs. 550. By the third time, a basketful of fish weighing 10 to 15 kg. worth about Rs. 400, is also sent to the girls house. This ritual is known as *baina*. This is a second stage of marriage after *magani*. In case of death of either sexes, one is allowed to perform another *magani* of one's own choice. According to one informant, nominal spending on *magani* ceremony is estimated Rs 500 and the most Rs. 2,000. This amount also includes the expenses of *baina*.

Preparation of Wedding

After completing the whole *baina* ritual, the parents of both groups talk about the convenience of wedding time, but they do not consult the horoscope. This ritual is not performed on the day of waxing moon and full moon of December and January. They prefer to perform the main wedding ceremony either on Sunday or Thursday which are considered as auspicious day.

Inaugural Ceremony

Every year, in the beginning of December when people realize that marriage season has come, they inform the *bharra*, also locally known as *gauntera* who then performs a *gamayet* ritual to grace the beginning of an auspicious marriage season. In his part, the *bharra* professes divination. This is an inaugural ceremony of the marriage season that proceeds for the whole one month in the Rana Tharu community. The religious significance of this ritual is to appease Bhagawati goddess who can suppress the evil spirits of their locality. At the end of marriage, the *bharra* again repeats the same ritual in which he thanks to the Bhagawati goddess for her help.

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Wedding Date

In order to confirm the date, the boy's side visits the girl's house and discusses about the date. Generally, this ritual called *din lyaune*, is performed in the month of November. In order to reconfirm the date for marriage, a ritual known as *pichhauchho* is performed twelve days before the wedding day. In order to complete the *pichhauchho* ritual, the boy's side has to send some 20 to 40 kg. of rice, 5 to 20 kg. of black gram, 1 bottle of cooking oil, 7 pieces of turmeric, 1 piece of *veli* (sweet) and some amount of fish to the girl's house. This offering is called *dahen ko chamal*. Later, the rice and black grams are sold and money is given to the bride on the occasion of marriage day. Now a days, only a very few Rana Tharu can afford to sent these items.

Replacement of Hearth

When the wedding date is decided, the *chulho pherne* (the replacement of hearth) ritual is performed by the womenfolk. The used oven is considered polluted, hence, they make three new ovens for cooking purpose at the courtyard which are to be used on the wedding day. After wedding, the same ovens are used for everyday cooking inside the kitchen until they are broken. This ritual is performed at the both wedding houses. This ritual is not performed in India.

House Decoration

While following different activities at the time of marriage, the wedding houses of the both groups are white washed twice on the fourth and the third day before the wedding day. This ritual is known as *chhiya chauka*, and *achha chauka* respectively. Thus they make their houses beautiful, new and fresh.

Invitation

After finishing the house decoration, the male members extend invitation to the their relatives and neighbours just one day before the wedding ceremony. The man deputed for this work, throws some grains and turmeric at the altar outside the main entrance saying '*nimta he*' which means 'you are invited' (to so and so's marriage ceremony). Now a days, few people have also started using printed invitation card. During field work, one household found to have sent an invitation card, five household sent chocolates, three household sent nuts and fifteen household used the grains as an omen of invitation to the individuals or family. It was observed that they also sent the invitation to their close relatives and ritual friends in India.

Pre-wedding Ritual

On the day before the marriage, two important rituals are observed - one early in the morning which is called *kastei* and the afternoon ritual as *bhuinya pujan*. The *kastei* and *bhuinya pujan* are also performed at the both wedding houses. In the early morning before starting the *kastei*, the *bharra* or shaman arrives at the bride's and groom's houses and chants few mantras to repel the evil spirits who may inflict on the wedding function. Then a few male visit the forest or the place where mango or banyan tree is available, along with some sweet, cooking oil, wheat flour, rice, burning fire of dung cake and white cotton thread. At first, the tree is worshipped and then it is wrapped around with the cotton thread for seven times in case of boy's *kastei* and five times in girl's case. The *bharra* also deals a blow to the tree trunk one time. As a result of this action the fallen bark is collected and used for cooking food on the

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wedding day which is considered as auspicious. The burning of fire is known as *kori aagi*. Thus *kastei* ritual is completed in the morning time. When asked about the importance of *kastei* ceremony, the *bharra* and other village specialists could not reply properly. During group discussion, one specialists opine that it is a kind of *upanayana* (sacred thread wearing ceremony). He further explained that long ago the ancestors of the present day Rana Tharu migrated from their homeland to the dense forest of terai. During their stay in the forest, they felt the need of Brahmin to perform the ritual like *upanayana* and marriage. So they took the sacred thread out of their body and wrapped around the tree realizing that wearing the sacred thread in the absence of Brahmin at the time of upanayana was of no use. Since then, they followed *kastei* ceremony on the occasion of marriage. This version indicates that the Rana Tharus are sacred thread wearer group. Some opined that during their stay in the forest it was very difficult to get pure food. This compelled them to take different kind of food available in the forest for their survival which obviously made them more polluted. In the end, they took their sacred thread out of their body and wrapped the tree around with it. Since then, they are considered as polluted group. This version is not very different from the first one. Other expressed that the reason of worshipping the tree was to avoid evil incidents such as the violence, robbery, rape and disturbance by evil spirits during the wedding procession on the way. According to another group, the significance of *kastei* ritual relates to the worship of *bannaspati* (one of the aspects of mother goddess) regarded as the goddess of forest. This version, to some extent is similar to the above one. The first and second interpretations show the Rana Tharu to be of Hindu origin. When enquired about the *upanayana* and the sacred thread as to why the sacred thread is wrapped around the tree for five times in girl's *kastei*. The informants did not argue on the fact that the Hindu women generally do not wear the sacred thread. An elderly *bharra* said that previously the Tharu used to go to the forest to worship the tree, but now a days, there is no forest and that they now worship the mango or banyan tree near by the village. Regarding the tree and the thread, a non-native Hindu viewed that while living in India the Rana Tharu might have worshipped the Lord Vishnu under the influence of the cult of Vaishnaism, or village Hinduism.

Worship of the Village Shrine

In the outskirts of every self-reliant Rana Tharu village, there is one shrine known as *bhuinya*. In the afternoon of the following day, the mothers of both bride and groom go to *bhuinya* to worship the deity. The *bhuniya* shrine is constructed on a simple platform. The mothers first wear traditional white veil and then proceeds along with the drum beater and children to the shrine. They also carry some ritual items like incense, burnt dung cake, dung, water, raw thread, bread and turmeric. The shrine is first purified or washed with dung and one of the assistants then washes eight different places of the shrine for the purpose of worship. The eight different places symbolize seven sisters of goddess Bhagavati and her one brother. The mothers then worship the *bhuinya* deity. Besides, a sacred post which is erected on one corner of the platform is wrapped around with cotton thread for seven times in the case of the boy's marriage and five times in the

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girl's case. Finally the mother prostrates herself before the *bhuinya* shrine and returns back. After completing the *bhuinya pagan* ritual, the mothers provide consecrated offerings to all participants present. The main purpose of worshipping *bhuinya* is to appease the sister goddesses for success, good luck and protection of bride and groom as well as children.

Day Activity

At noon, the groom's sister's husband goes to river for fishing which is considered as one of the important rituals. In this community, fish is considered as quintessential food which brings good luck to the groom's house. But this activity is not observed at the bride's house. At the same time, the neighbours gather at the wedding house to show their cooperation which is a must. This group help construct a long open shelter on the edge of the courtyard where the bride's or groom's party rest and sleep at night. Most of the purchases are made on this day. A canopy is also set up at the courtyard. Those Rana Tharu who perform Hindu ritual through the help of Brahmin, carry out the whole activities and rituals outside the home.

Worship of Narayan

Though many Tharus families do not worship the god Narayan or Vishnu, the Tharus who are influenced by hill Hindu migrants, worship the Hindu god at the time of wedding. Narayan is worshipped through fire sacrifice *homa* inside the canopy which is locally known as *katha lagaune*, but the importance of ritual is still unknown to them. The whole ritual is administered by the hill Brahmin. During the field study in Sama Daiji villages, two families followed this ritual style and one family totally discarded it. But in one interior village only one family followed this Hindu worship, whereas four families rejected it. They follow this tradition just to maintain social prestige in the village. Some Rana Tharu families perform this puja one day before marriage or after it in which the groom is advised to observe a fast for the whole day. But this ritual is followed only by the groom. This shows that the Tharus are in a process of pahadiaization or Hinduization.

Photo : Dr. Ramesh Raj Kunwar

Wedding feast being prepared by women cook known as bhojan.

The Wedding Day

In the morning of the wedding day, the *bharra* arrives at the groom's house and spells out few mantras and provides amulet called long, to the groom. Most of the guests including groom's sister's husband *bahanuiya*, are present at the wedding house. At the courtyard, women cook known as

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bhojan, prepare food for the wedding party and house guests. Few men seem busy in making three different packets of raw sugar or gur, one bottle of milk and some fish dishes. All these gifts are to be taken to the bride's house. The act of taking the gifts to the bride's house, is called *dilmarai* and *daihadiya*. The *gur* is kept till *charai* festival which is observed in March. Milk is considered as an essential ritual item for the bride. If it is forgotten, the bride's party may impose a fine on the groom's wedding group. When asked about the importance of milk they replied that this was their tradition. As they have come under the influence of the Hindus, the milk is considered as one of the five nectars, *panchamrit*. The purpose of serving milk to the bride is to make her free from her mother's debt. They believe that, after taking the milk she will take new birth. The bride does not take food for the whole day unless the milk is brought to her from the groom's house. On this day, the bride has to take food along with milk brought from the groom's house. From the day before the wedding, the girl is not allowed to leave her home. She is even advised to sit inside the altar room *kolha*, where outsiders are not allowed to enter. Besides, some men also prepare hammock. The groom's sisters draw a line (Nepali : *rekhi*) on the ground with flour inside the altar room and perform songs for few minutes. The groom is called inside the room and asked to sit on the drawn line. The sisters and sister-in-law then rub his body with cooking oil and turmeric (Curcuma longa) amidst singing. The same ritual is performed at bride's house. As soon as this ritual is over, the groom is asked to sit at the centre of the courtyard where the bride's relatives repeat the same ritual but they do not sing at this time. The groom is offered some cash amount in terms of present by his relatives. At this moment the groom's mother also sits behind the groom. While observing this ceremony it was found that each relatives presented an amount of Rs. 1 to 20 to the groom. Out of amount Rs. 215 collected on this ceremony, Rs. 200 was given to the groom's mother and the rest Rs. 15 to the groom's sister. After completing this ritual, the groom takes a bath and enters into the room for dressing up. From this time onward, the groom is escorted by his sister's husband, *bahanuiya* who carries a sword with him. The role of *bahanuiya* is very important in the marriage of the Rana Tharu. A *bahanuiya* wears one long white scarf on the occasion of marriage and he is easily recognizable. The groom is regarded as king and his *bhanuiya* as body guard who escorts the groom till the wedding day.

The turmeric considered as one of the quintessential materials, is used only on the occasion of marriage. In case of second marriage, the groom is not allowed to use it. Ritually, one's whole life is separated by mere use of turmeric. He who has not used it is called *kuwanro* or bachelor and she who has not used it is called *kuwanri* or maiden respectively. It is believed that after using the turmeric he or she becomes impure implying that they have entered into a partnership.

The question was asked as to why the Rana Tharu consider the turmeric as an quintessential item. The answer was simple - it was their tradition to accept this item. According to neighbouring hill Brahmins, the turmeric is considered as the symbol of enemy defeater, poison killer, decorative element, body cleaner, witch killer, auspicious, sacred, victorious and Ganesh (Sans: haridra). Some people also use it to get relief from Jupiter

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(Vrihaspati) (Khatri: 1985). The use of the turmeric is very popular among the Hindus of terai of Nepal and northern plains of India. But, it is still unclear as to what context the Tharus make a use of it. At noon, the invitees, *nimtahar* are offered salt, *gur* and bread by the groom's side. After taking food, the groom's marriage party proceeds to the bride's house.

On the wedding day, all invitees and neighbours gather at the bride's house and offer some cash amount to the bride in terms of present. In Sama Daiji village each householder visited the bride's house at the day time and offered Rs 5 as present. Later, the food is served on banana's leaf (Musa paradisica) or aghaiya's (sal) leaf to the invitees or the villagers.

After the groom is dressed up, he is asked to sit inside the decorated hammock which is then carried by four men. The *bharra* performs some rituals before the wedding procession leaves the groom's house. The procession stops at crossroads near by the forest or river where the *bharra* once again chants mantras to ward off the evil spirits. The informants report that the main reason of performing the ritual is to protect the groom and his party from the ghost and bad wind, *vayu*. According to their belief, if the *bharra* does not spell out the mantras, the ghost may attack the bride and groom on the occasion of *bhiuri phiraune*. Even the ghost may create obstacle on the particular occasion. The *bharra* approaches the goddess bhawani who can easily mitigate and control the activities of evil forces.

Previously, they had no tradition of hiring musicians in the wedding ceremony. But now a days, the rich family hire musicians who are occupational caste group *Damai*, the tailor emigrated from the hills. He who hires the musicians is considered as a rich man of the village. During the field study, in Padau village, one wedding group arrived without musicians. Villagers immediately commented 'marriage without musician' and 'wife's natal home without her younger sister'. These days, the rich and exposed Tharus hire musicians, tractor or Bus, transistor, loudspeaker and petromax at the time of marriage. They are culturally pressurized from both modern Indian tradition and urban tradition of Nepali society. Some

Photo : Dr. Ramesh Raj Kunwar

A glimpse of pai pujan ceremony.

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bhojan, prepare food for the wedding party and house guests. Few men seem busy in making three different packets of raw sugar or gur, one bottle of milk and some fish dishes. All these gifts are to be taken to the bride's house. The act of taking the gifts to the bride's house, is called *dilmarai* and *daihadiya*. The *gur* is kept till *charai* festival which is observed in March. Milk is considered as an essential ritual item for the bride. If it is forgotten, the bride's party may impose a fine on the groom's wedding group. When asked about the importance of milk they replied that this was their tradition. As they have come under the influence of the Hindus, the milk is considered as one of the five nectars, *panchamrit*. The purpose of serving milk to the bride is to make her free from her mother's debt. They believe that, after taking the milk she will take new birth. The bride does not take food for the whole day unless the milk is brought to her from the groom's house. On this day, the bride has to take food along with milk brought from the groom's house. From the day before the wedding, the girl is not allowed to leave her home. She is even advised to sit inside the altar room *kolha*, where outsiders are not allowed to enter. Besides, some men also prepare hammock. The groom's sisters draw a line (Nepali : *rekhi*) on the ground with flour inside the altar room and perform songs for few minutes. The groom is called inside the room and asked to sit on the drawn line. The sisters and sister-in-law then rub his body with cooking oil and turmeric (Curcuma longa) amidst singing. The same ritual is performed at bride's house. As soon as this ritual is over, the groom is asked to sit at the centre of the courtyard where the bride's relatives repeat the same ritual but they do not sing at this time. The groom is offered some cash amount in terms of present by his relatives. At this moment the groom's mother also sits behind the groom. While observing this ceremony it was found that each relatives presented an amount of Rs. 1 to 20 to the groom. Out of amount Rs. 215 collected on this ceremony, Rs. 200 was given to the groom's mother and the rest Rs. 15 to the groom's sister. After completing this ritual, the groom takes a bath and enters into the room for dressing up. From this time onward, the groom is escorted by his sister's husband, *bahanuiya* who carries a sword with him. The role of *bahanuiya* is very important in the marriage of the Rana Tharu. A *bahanuiya* wears one long white scarf on the occasion of marriage and he is easily recognizable. The groom is regarded as king and his *bhanuiya* as body guard who escorts the groom till the wedding day.

The turmeric considered as one of the quintessential materials, is used only on the occasion of marriage. In case of second marriage, the groom is not allowed to use it. Ritually, one's whole life is separated by mere use of turmeric. He who has not used it is called *kuwanro* or bachelor and she who has not used it is called *kuwanri* or maiden respectively. It is believed that after using the turmeric he or she becomes impure implying that they have entered into a partnership.

The question was asked as to why the Rana Tharu consider the turmeric as an quintessential item. The answer was simple - it was their tradition to accept this item. According to neighbouring hill Brahmins, the turmeric is considered as the symbol of enemy defeater, poison killer, decorative element, body cleaner, witch killer, auspicious, sacred, victorious and Ganesh (Sans: haridra). Some people also use it to get relief from Jupiter

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(Vrihaspati) (Khatri: 1985). The use of the turmeric is very popular among the Hindus of terai of Nepal and northern plains of India. But, it is still unclear as to what context the Tharus make a use of it. At noon, the invitees, *nimtahar* are offered salt, *gur* and bread by the groom's side. After taking food, the groom's marriage party proceeds to the bride's house.

On the wedding day, all invitees and neighbours gather at the bride's house and offer some cash amount to the bride in terms of present. In Sama Daiji village each householder visited the bride's house at the day time and offered Rs 5 as present. Later, the food is served on banana's leaf (Musa paradisica) or aghaiya's (sal) leaf to the invitees or the villagers.

After the groom is dressed up, he is asked to sit inside the decorated hammock which is then carried by four men. The *bharra* performs some rituals before the wedding procession leaves the groom's house. The procession stops at crossroads near by the forest or river where the *bharra* once again chants mantras to ward off the evil spirits. The informants report that the main reason of performing the ritual is to protect the groom and his party from the ghost and bad wind, *vayu*. According to their belief, if the *bharra* does not spell out the mantras, the ghost may attack the bride and groom on the occasion of *bhiuri phiraune*. Even the ghost may create obstacle on the particular occasion. The *bharra* approaches the goddess bhawani who can easily mitigate and control the activities of evil forces.

Previously, they had no tradition of hiring musicians in the wedding ceremony. But now a days, the rich family hire musicians who are occupational caste group *Damai*, the tailor emigrated from the hills. He who hires the musicians is considered as a rich man of the village. During the field study, in Padau village, one wedding group arrived without musicians. Villagers immediately commented 'marriage without musician' and 'wife's natal home without her younger sister'. These days, the rich and exposed Tharus hire musicians, tractor or Bus, transistor, loudspeaker and petromax at the time of marriage. They are culturally pressurized from both modern Indian tradition and urban tradition of Nepali society. Some

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A glimpse of pai pujan ceremony.

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families even hire musicians from India. Instead of wearing traditional dresses, the groom wears western suit on the occasion. However, no priest is needed to administer the wedding ritual.

The Wedding Procession

The wedding procession is known as *baraintiya*. Except the bride and the groom, most of the members travel by oxen-cart. In one wedding group, there consists 6 to 15 oxen-carts and few cycle riders. In one oxen-cart, four to six people can easily be accommodated. Each *baraintiya* including the groom carry their bed clothes with them incase they stay overnight at the bride's house. The wedding group drinks alcohol whenever they find alehouses on the way. Before the wedding group reach the bride's house, one ritual is performed to stop the procession for the purpose of sorting out items to be needed at the brides' house. Three men designated as *karbariya*, then throw pieces of stone towards the groom's hammock and they proceed to the bride's house. The act of throwing stones and receiving *gur* is known as *dilmarai*. The duty of karbariya is also to serve the water to the wedding group as soon as it arrives at the bride's house. The water is used for washing hands and feet by the *baraintiya* before refreshment is taken. Each *karbaria* gets Rs 5 to 10 from the groom's side. The weary groom alone sits inside the hut. In the following evening around 8 pm, *pai pujan* (Lit. foot worshipping) is performed at the centre of the courtyard. When the time for *pai pujan* comes, the groom and the bride are taken to the ritual place and made to sit together. The bride's face is entirely covered by a white veil therefore, both bride and groom cannot see each other's face. The bride weeps loudly even though she is assisted by her two female friends. In this ritual, the bride's relatives apply butter on the feet of the bride and the groom and wash them. Later, their feet are also touched or rubbed with pieces of white cloth and *dubo* (Cynodon dactylan) grass. This ritual is called *dubdana*. After this, one part of the groom's cloth is fastened with that of the bride to make a knot (Nep. Lagan Gantho) and they are made to go round the sacred ritual place for seven times. This ritual is called *viuri phiraune*. The Hindus call it saptapadi. The act helps to establish a lasting relationship between the bride and the groom. This *pai pujan* ceremony is akin to *kanyadan* (=bride gift) of the Hindu. The Tharus usually do not give dowry to their daughters

Photo: Dr. Ramesh Rai Kunwar

A wedding procession: The groom sits on a decorated hammock which is carried by four men, while baraintiya travel by bullock-carts.

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which is very popular among the Hindus of India and the terai region of Nepal.

After completing the *pai pujan* ceremony, the formal dinner is served around 9:30 pm. Sometimes, the groom refuses to take food which indicates that he is not satisfied with the gift presented by the bride's parents. This is known as *dulaha rutnu*. The bride's parents are informed of this through the *bahanuiya*. In order to satisfy the groom, the bride's parents try to add some cash amount or articles such as a watch or a living cow. If he is satisfied he will join the dinner party. By tradition, a few items like *lota* (water jug), *thaila* (bag), blouse and veil are taken to the bride from the groom's side which is called *daij* in Kanchanpur and *dola* in India. The Rana Tharu of India take it as a bride's price.

The Kinship Familiarization

In the early next morning people get up and wash their face. On the other hand, the *bhojan* start preparing morning food. At about the same time another ritual called *bhetai*, is performed at the centre of courtyard. The groom is asked to stand along with *bahanuiya* and is offered one rupee or silver ring by each of the relatives of the bride. Each relative greet the groom with the word ram! ram! which helps the groom to get acquainted with the bride's affinal kin group. After completing this ritual, the groom goes back to his seat; the relatives are later on served with food and drink i.e. raw sugar, salt, vegetable curry, bread and *jand* (local beer). As soon as the groom's party is served morning meal around 10 am., it starts making return journey to the groom's house. By tradition, they walk for a few minutes and wait for the bride and her party at one crossroads.

See-Off Ceremony

The bride, after taking food, is also dressed up inside the room filled with doleful sound of women and bride herself. The men remain mute spectators of this sad atmosphere. The bride is taken to the hammock placed outside in the company of her friends, sisters-in-laws and other women whose weepy faces are also covered up with black veil in contrast to the bride's white veil. Before taking seat inside the hammock, the *bharra* spells out the oracles. At first, the bride seems hesitant and sad. She weeps loudly uttering '*han aiyo han aiyo*' (Oh! mother) ..., *han bhauji* (Oh! sister-in-law) ... *me tumko kaise chod ke jaun* (how can I go leaving you ?) and *han bhauiji mere khyal rakhiyo* (Oh sister-in-law, please take care of me). She will repeat this to her kith and kin and friends. Her weeping mother responds by saying *han mere babu* .... (I looked after you and today you are leaving me... how can I control my heart ?). This reveals close interrelationship between the female groups in the Rana Tharu society.

The *bharra*, after completing this ritual, asks the bride to take seat inside the hammock. She is forced to drink water so that she will not get thirsty on her long way.

She is also given a few amount of grains which is needed at the arrival of the groom's house. As soon as the bride takes her seat inside the hammock its window is covered with some clothes so as to avoid seeing by others as well as the evil spirits. Few minutes after reaching at the crossroads, the *bharra* once again repeats the same ritual to control the evil spirits. This allows the women to finally see the bride off and then the hammock is carried up to the place where the groom's party is waiting for

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her arrival. From this point on, both the bride's party known as *dulhera* and the groom's party proceed to the groom's house. According to their tradition, the bride is accompanied by her friends, women and children all the way and spend the night at the groom's house. In similar manner, the men of groom's side go to see the bride's house.

The procession, before reaching at the groom's house, stops at the crossroads or sacred place near by the village or wedding house. Again, a ritual is performed by *bharra* who prays to the goddess for protection of the marriage procession from the evil men and spirits. The *bahanuiya* also takes part in this ritual. When the group reaches home, the groom's sisters do not allow to place the hammock on the ground unless they get some cash payment from the groom's procession. After receiving some cash amount, the two hammocks of bride and groom are allowed to rest on the ground. Both the bride and the groom are asked to stand side by side and the auspicious knot (Nep: lagan gantho), is again made between the bride and the groom; the knot represents their marital tie. First, their feet are washed by the groom's sister and her husband. In Chandan Chowki village of India the Rana Tharus perform a different kind of ritual known as *garva* in which the groom pours water on the ground and then the wife's younger sister addresses him as *jija* (elder sister's husband)(Mathur, 1967:39).

The newly wed couple relaxes inside the interior room called *kolha*. Soon the *sitkaura* ritual is performed at the courtyard. Some ritual items like oil lamp and boiled rice are required for this ritual. The bride and groom take their seat near *deuta* which is represented by a small platform. At first, their hands are washed and then the boiled rice is offered to the bride by the groom's mother for seven times. Rice is also offered to the groom who in turn, places it on the ground for seven times. After this ritual, the sisters and their husbands again block the door of the main entrance of the house unless the couple makes some gifts in cash and kind (a cow) to them. The couple then enters the home. This ritual is known as *mohod gesai*. The groom's consanguineal kin group visit the house and each of the group member offer one rupee as a present to the bride. They are introduced by her mother-in-law who sits near by. This ritual is called *bhetai*. After *bhetai* is over, the dinner is served to *dulhera* and *baraitiya*. After dinner, the bride goes to sleep with her own female friends. On the third day of the wedding day, the bride is taken out for toilet in the early morning. Before going out, she offers some grains to the exterior altar. This is a kind of worship to the newly acquainted gods of her new home. On that day, no other ritual is observed except serving food to the *dulhera*. The bride's face is still covered with the same veil. Neither groom nor his family members can see her face.

At noon, the *dulhera* is sent back to her mothers home with the *bahanuiya*. This act is known as *ninhar*. The *bahanuiya* accompanys the bride because he has to bring the bride back by next day or on the fourth day. Before the *dulhera* party reach home, one more ritual is performed by the *bharra* to appease the goddess for protection from the potential attack of the evil spirits and men. In the following evening, a big feast is organized at the bride's house.

By tradition, the bride along with her few friends and *bahanuiya* comes back to the groom's house. Upon reaching home, she is carefully taken

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down from the decorated oxen-cart and asked to make offering of husked rice, *achara ko chamal* to the god, *deuta*. She also offers some grains to the *kolha* and prostrates before the same *deuta* for blessings.

After completing this worshipping activities, she changes her formal attire. This act symbolizes that she has become free from all kinds of marriage rituals. At this time, both the groom and his family members seem quite curious to see her face. This takes place on the fourth day of the wedding. Once again, the *bhetai* ritual is performed in which the consanguineal members come to see her and offer one rupee as gift. While greeting her, everyone will say ram! ram!. This ritual helps her to know the newly established kin group. The following night, she is asked to sleep with the groom's mother who is supposed to treat her as her own daughter. But, this tradition is not followed by both educated bride and groom instead they start sleeping together from the first night. Traditionally, most brides sleep with their husbands only from the fifth day of their wedding. Socially, they become husband and wife only from the fifth day. According to their belief, the bride changes her father's clan and enters into the husband's clan only when she is permitted to sleep with her husband on the fifth day onward. In the early morning of the fifth day, the bride wakes up and goes to the well or water tap to fetch water. She does this after offering some grains to the well which indicates that she is fully recognized as responsible member of the new household as a daughter-in-law. Still, some rituals remain to be observed, as a result she is introduced to the villagers in the same morning. In this *bhetai* or introduction ritual she is guided by her mother-in-law. Soon after the *bhetai* rite, a big ceremony is observed around 10 am. at the house of the groom. One member from every household of the village attend the *badhai* ceremony, carrying with them at least 5 kg. of unhusked rice. All the members put their grains on the same spot of the courtyard. Finally, there forms a big pile of unhusked rice. A man attendant in female dress starts dancing on the pile while a musician from the same group beat the drum. The person who beats the drum, is given some amount of unhusked rice. This humorous dance ceremony known as *kanara,* lasts for an hour and is observed by all people. The purpose of this *badhai* ceremony is to make the occasion a happy event in the village.

Yet, another social ritual, known as *pat dalne* is performed at the courtyard. This ritual recognizes the bride as the full member of the society. Accordingly, a big feast, *hatkanna* is organized for the villagers. The bride pours two spoon of clarified butter on the meal of each individual. Thus, by accepting the water and the food from her hands the villagers recognize her as the member of their society. Since then no food is cooked at the hearth of the courtyard. On the same day, the *bahanuiya*, married daughters and other relatives go back to their homes.

Closing Ceremony

The Rana Tharu marriage season is concluded in January. This is announced by the *bharra* who performs the last communal rite called *bhandara*. The *bhandara* ceremony marks the closing of the marriage season for whole year. The *bharra* while performing this ritual thanks the seven sister goddesses for the help and success of the entire rituals. From that day onward, the mother goddesses are sent away from the village by making

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offering of various dishes to them through *bharra* at the crossroads.

On the same day, or two-three days after the closing ceremony, the bride's parents go to the groom's house to take their daughter back. This is called *ninhariya*. Thus, the bride goes to her own natal home and stay there for up to *hori* festival (Kunwar: 1997). She comes back to her home in April and stays for another four-five days. She again goes back to her natal home. In July, she comes back to her husband's house to attend *ashadhi* puja for a short time. Again she goes back to her parent's house and returns for the *teej* festival during which she goes to her own natal home and comes back in September. After staying for five days, she again goes back to her natal home for *diwali* festival and stays there for three months. This activity of the bride is known as *chalo* in Kanchanpur and *ninharo* in Kailali districts of Nepal. On the whole, the bride spends one year at her parent's house and finally goes to her husband's house. Some families are found to have kept their married daughters for two years. The married daughters during their stay at natal home, are not allowed to worship the gods of her parents and the village. If she falls ill, the *bharra* worships her husband's gods for her welfare.

After observing the whole marriage rites and rituals, a question was asked to the villagers as to why the rice grains are thrown or offered by the bride at the groom's house. To this, an elderly lady answered in a song:

"maiyo ko hoti lendi pendi
we mohalai lai dhomeri
sashu ki hoti kwari kanya
we moha par ukhare gi"

The song tells about the bride that how she was born from her mother's womb, was brought up and given in marriage... and one day, people took her corpse on their shoulder to her new home... she became the daughter of her groom's parents. May the household perform mortuary rite through which she could enter into transcendental world.

Therefore, the reason of bringing rice grains by the bride, is to make an offering to the dead body of the bride in case she dies and gets buried under the ground. Thus, the dead bride gets new birth at the groom's house. According to this version, the concept of rebirth is alive in the Rana Tharu society.

The Role of Bahanuiya

In the Rana Tharu marriage, the role of the husband's elder sister, younger sister and niece's husband seems very important. In their absence, it is very difficult to complete the marriage rituals of a groom.

A daughter's husband is addressed by the term *damad*. However, on the occasion of marriage, they have different role and status. Therefore, they are addressed as *bahanuiya* instead of real kinship terminology i.e. *damad* or *jija*. If one family has only one *bahanuiya*, it is easy to identify him. But some families might have more than five *damads*. In such a situation all of them wear small piece of scarf on their neck which helps to identify them as a *damad*. According to their social rule, the *damad* can be a *bahanuiya* if there is a marriage of wife's maternal uncle's son, brother's sister's son, wife uncle's son and wife's brother. However, all the *bahanuiya* work as the guards for the groom. Whernever they ask for a drink, their demand should be immediately fulfilled by the groom's parents so much so that the groom's parents feel happy when

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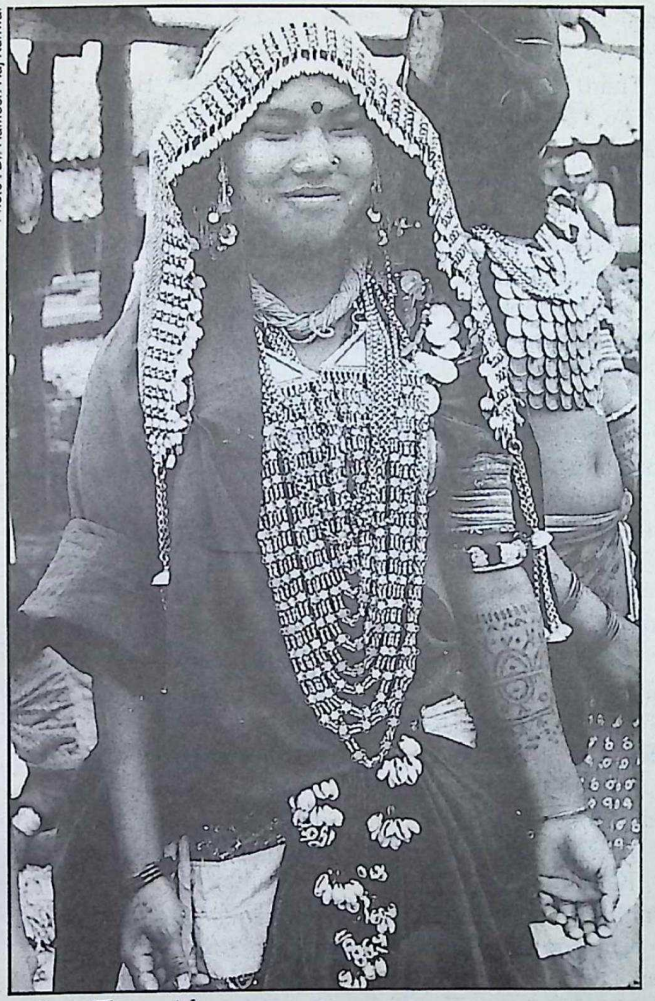

Photo : Dr. Ramesh Raj Kunwar

A Rana Tharu girl wearing a set of twenty seven silver ornaments.

the *bahanuiya* go back to their homes after marriage.

Wedding Dress

So far as the wedding apparel is concerned, the groom wears a long *jhagiya* (the upper garment suruwal (trouser), *pheta* (waist belt), *alga* (muffler) and *pagaa* (turban). Most of the clothes, except shoes, are white in colour. Besides, a few ornaments like *hansuliya* (silver necklace), *sikri* (necklace), *kataro* (axe like ornament) and a garland of Nepali paper currency are worn by the groom. Now a days, a few grooms can be seen in western suit and turban. The groom uses black soot on his eyes and red tika on his forehead. The bride's attire consists *bambai ghangariya* (a long red skirt), *seto choli* (white veil) and slipper. Her ornaments are *bichhiya* (ring worn on middle finger) and *chonti* (worn on hair). Due to their close contact with Mahendra Nagar market, few brides also use Indian cosmetic. Most of the wedding apparel are bought in the adjacent Indian market.

Marriage Expenses

Many purchased items used in the marriages, were estimated according to the market price prevalent in 1989. Accordingly, the middle class family spending was Rs. 9,000 which covered both, cash (Rs.4,000) and kind (Rs.5,000). A rich family spent Rs. 15,000 in cash and kind out of which, Rs. 6,000 cash was spent on different items, and the kinds equalled to Rs. 9,000. From the economic view point, the marriage is considered as one of the biggest burdens in one's life. The husbands seem always on guard against their wives until they give birth to atleast two or three children. Remarriage is hardly possible because of prevailing *magani* system. Most men are not in a position to get remarried due to their poor economic conditions, and on the top of it, he has already spent a lot of money in the previous marriage that continued affecting him for several years. However, the prevailing *jari* system has brought some solace to them.

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Listing of Documents from Mājh Kirāt

Ratan Kumar Rai

The scope of study in Kirāta or Kirānti history appears to be extensive for there existed a Kirāta dynasty whose hegemony lasted more than a millennium years in Nepal.[1] Nepal's modern history reveal that the Kirāta later on migrated to east as far as Myanmar. Those who continued living in Nepal valley with the newcomers, so called Lichhavis and formed a single large group, today known as Newar, still preserve much of the attributes of early Kirāta civilisation. It is often postulated that the Lichhavis, so called were non other than the 'sanskritised' Kirātas, an offshoot of the Kirātas who followed Hindu and Buddhist faiths. However, those Kirātas who moved into the hilly regions of eastern Nepal, or beyond, retain their pre Hindu-Buddhist form of belief called Yuma to this time.

Traditionally, the eastern hilly regions have been divided into three parts - Wallo Kirāt, Mājh Kirāt and Pallo Kirāt. The Wallo Kirāt together with the Mājh Kirāt constitute a single unit called Khambuwān or the land of Khambu, an early epithet of Rāī Kirāta, and lies between Dudh Kosi and Arun rivers while Limbuwān is another name for Pallo Kirāt extending from Arun river to the eastern most border of Nepal with India and in the north with China. The Wallo Kirāt lies east of Banepa and west of Dudh Kosi river.

A thorough study of the early Kirātas pose a serious challenge to modern historians. It is no wonder that the modern historiography of Nepal manifest some undesirable trait, an air of 'racial or colonial' conceitedness. As a result, Kirātas have been unfavourably criticised, marginalised and their glorious antiquity questioned or even discarded. Attempts have been made (and is still in the offing) by historians, so called to disassociate present day Kirātas from that of the historical Kirātas of ancient Nepal. There seems however, a genuine need for 'Rewriting' the Nepali history for posterity.

Present attempt aims at bringing both published as well as unpublished Documents of varied nature from Mājh Kirāt in facsimile edition with a view to contribute to the understanding of the position of the Kirātas in relation to their long historical continuity.

Fortunately enough, documents contained herein, have already been published in Nepali by Risiram Arjel in 1985 (Baisakh 2042). His book also contains Documents from Pallo Kirāt which the scribe of these lines hopes to bring out in facsimile in the future issues.[2]

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1 The *Gopālarājavamsāvali* gives the names of Thirty Two Kirāta kings. For names of Kirāta kings, see Dhanavajra Vajracārya and Kamal P. Malla: *The Gopālarājavamsāvali*: Tata pascāt Gopālamahispāla nirjijtya: Kirātarājā pravartath: Rājā Sriyelam varsa 90 ....., pp. 25, 26, 74 Nepal Research Centre Publications No. 9,1985.

2 Risiram Arjel: Mājh Kirāt, Published by Rajendra Pradhan, Bhojpur-5; 2042 Baisaka (1985).

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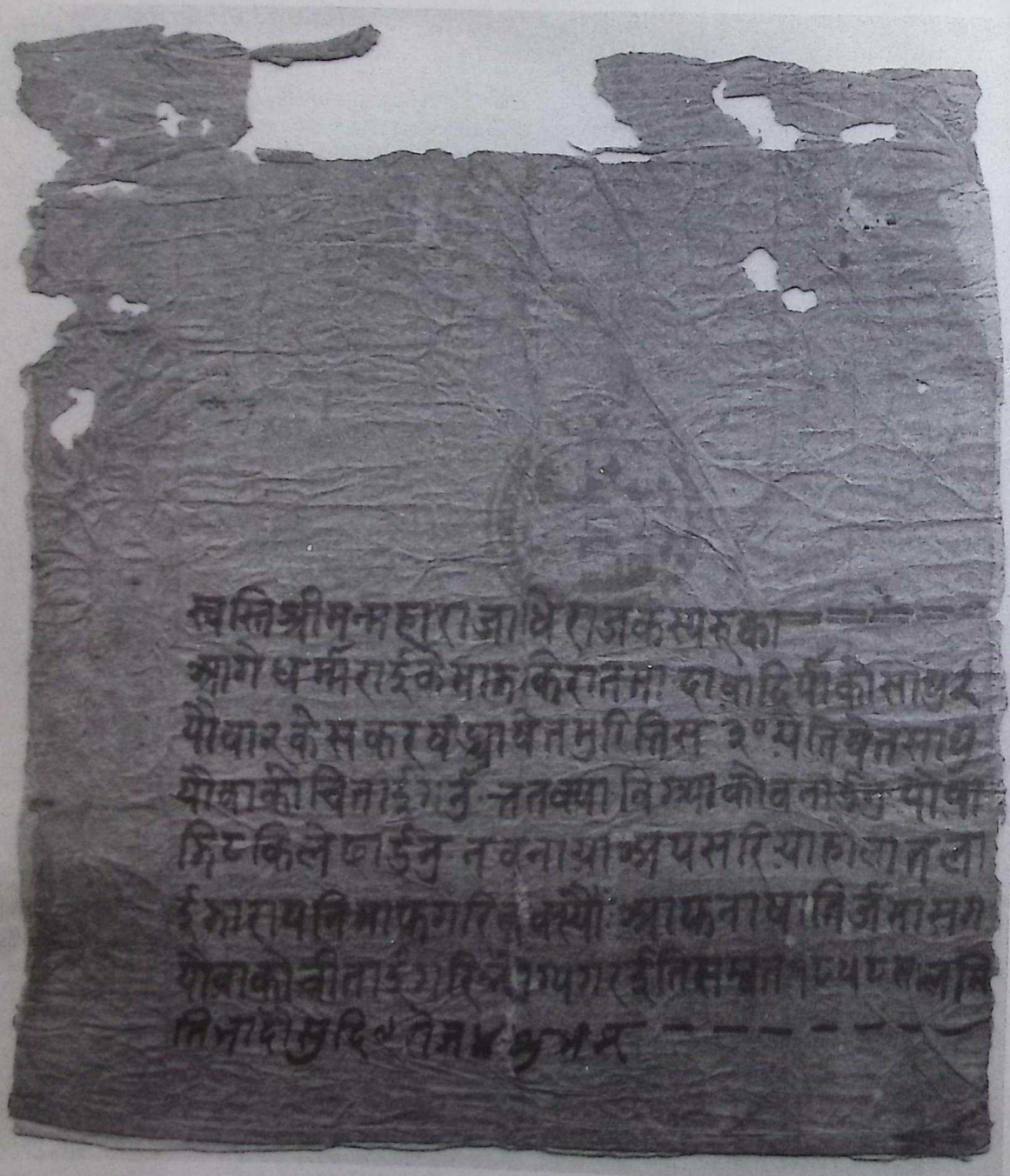
Document - A



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Document - A[a]

Particulars :

Handwritten on Nepali paper (daphne cannabina)
Original size : 17.5 (length) x 15.5 cm. (width)
Actual text written on 7.8 cm. (length) x 13.2 cm. (width)
Nature of document : Kasya Rukkā. A Royal Decree relating to the maintenance of bridges and public resting places in Māj̣h Kirāt.
Addressee : Dharma Rai
Date of issue : 1858 VS (1801 AD)

Transcription/Transliteration :

srī durgā/jiū[b]

(A Royal Seal Containing:)[c]

srī durgā
(Khaḍga Nisān or Sword Emblem,
a weapon of Durgā is placed horizontally)
bhawānī

svasti srīmanmāhārājadhirajakasyarukkā = = = = =
āge dharmma rāī ke māj̣h kirāt mā dāwā dirpāko sāghu 2
pauwā 2 ke sakar[d] khanghrā khet muri[e] tis 30 yati khet sāghu
pauwā ko citāi garnu. bhatkyā bigrayā ko banāūnu pauwā
jhiṭkele chāūnu. na banāyā apsariyā holā talā
ī jhārā pani māph gari bakseuṅ: āphnā khātirjamā saga
pauwāko citāi gari bhogya gar īti samvat 1858 sal mi
ti bhādau sudi 9 roj 4 subhaṁ - - - - - - -

Name/Names of Issuer/Issuers are not mentioned on either side of the Document.

(a) Cf. Risiram Arjel: Sāghu Pauwāko Sambhār; *Māj̣h Kirāt*; pp. 41,42.
(b) This Line of Content is ripped off from the Document.
(c) Diameter of the Red Royal Seal is 3.8 cm.
(d) Risiram Arjel: Sakat, p. 41.
(e) Ibid: Muṭi

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Document - B[a]

Particulars :

Handwritten on Nepali paper (daphne cannabina)
Original size : 27.5 cm. (length) x 14.8 cm. (width)
Actual text written on : 10.3 cm. (length) x 14.8 cm. (width)
Nature of document : Kasyā Rukkā. Confirmation of Kipat Holding of Jirā Mani Rāī in Māgh Kirāt.
Addressee : Jirā Mani Rāī[b]
Date of Issue : 1879 VS (1823 AD)

Transcription/Transliteration :

srī durgā jiū

(A Royal Seal containing :)[c]

srī durgā
(Khadga Nisān or Sword Emblem placed horizontally)
bhawānī

svasti srī manmāhārājadhirajakasyarukkā - - - -
āge. jirāma ni rāī ke. dilpā kā ammal madhaye terā
varāju[d] vāvu dekhi āja samma khāī carci āyā ko jimi
kipaṭ wāli khādidkhā kharak jācmā thāmiyāko. ā
phnā kuṭā kodālāle virhāyākā khet virhauṭā virhauṭī
tero kipaṭ jagā thāmi bakseon. āphnā khātirjāmā sangā a
ghi dekhi lāgyāko daidastur tāri[e] ḍoko boko gari kipaṭ
jāni bhogye gar. īti samvat 1879 sāl miti magh sudi
3 roj 4 subhaṁ - - - - - - - - - -

Content on the back : mārphat : prāṇ shāh
mārphat : raṇodhaut shāh
mārphat : bhim sen thāpā (Wooden Seal)[f]
mārphat : bhaktbir thāpā mārphat : bir kesar pāṇḍey
mārphat : udaya giri mārphat : vālnarsiṅ kunwar

(a) Cf. Risiram Arjel: Jirā Mani Rāī Ko nām Rukkā, *Mājh Kirāt*; p. 42.
(b) Editor's Grandfather four times removed. Original Document belongs to the editor, Hari Bangsha Kirant.
(c) Diameter of the Red Royal Seal is 3.8 cm.
(d) It is clear that Jirā Mani Rāī inherited his Kipaṭ holding from his great grandfather. Thus, the Kipaṭ holding was not only confined to a particular community but it was also possible to derive from one's ancestor.
(e) Probably tāri is misspelled by original scribe. Risiram Arjel's rendering tiri for tāri probably, is the correct spelling. See Risiram Arjel: *Mājh Kirāt*, p. 42.
(f) Bhim Sen Thāpā, the longest serving Prime Minister (1806-1837) hardly at all signed an official document during his tenure in office. It is likely that the woodcut seal or stamp used in the official documents had been fashioned after his writing style.

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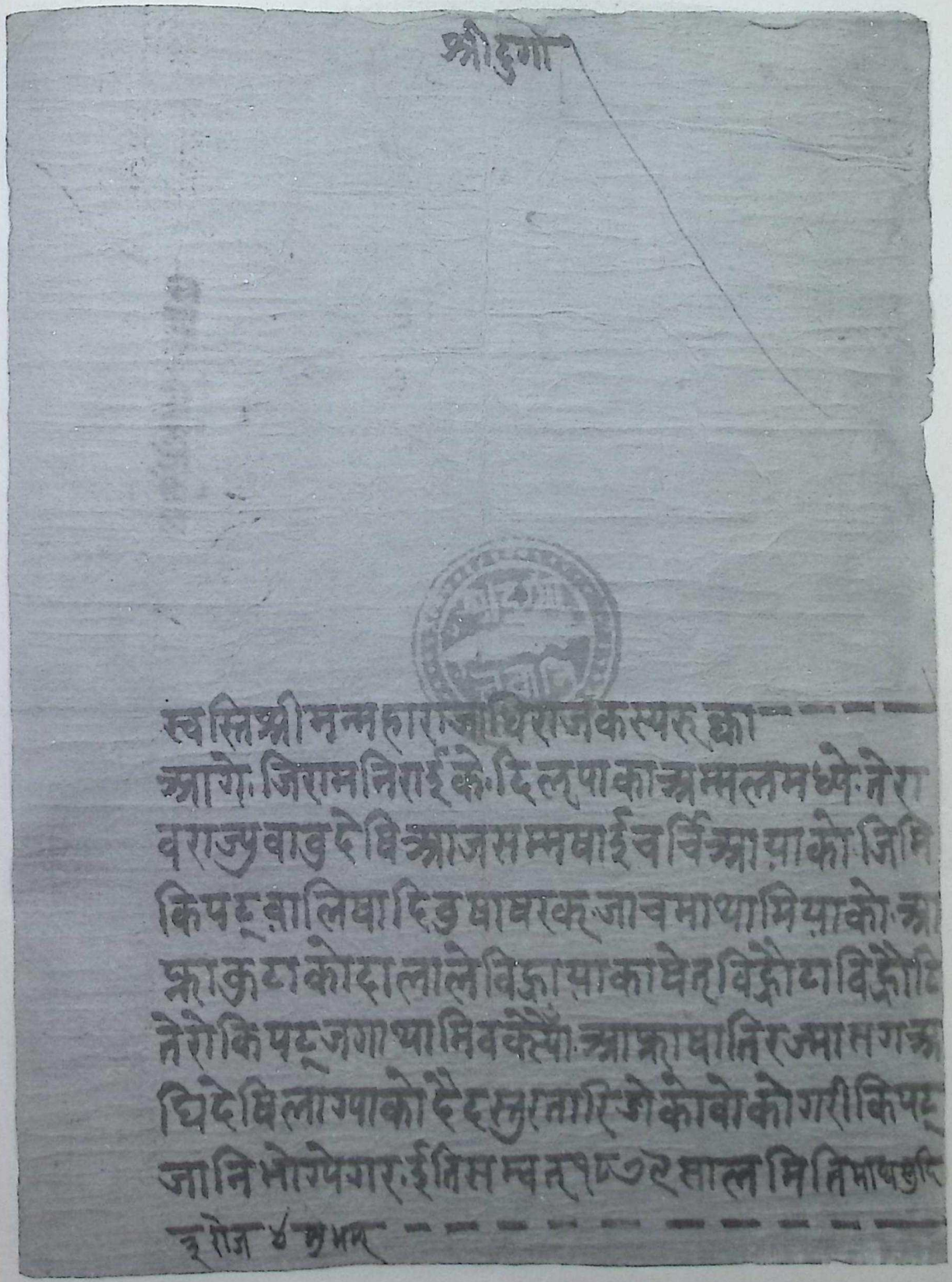
Document - B



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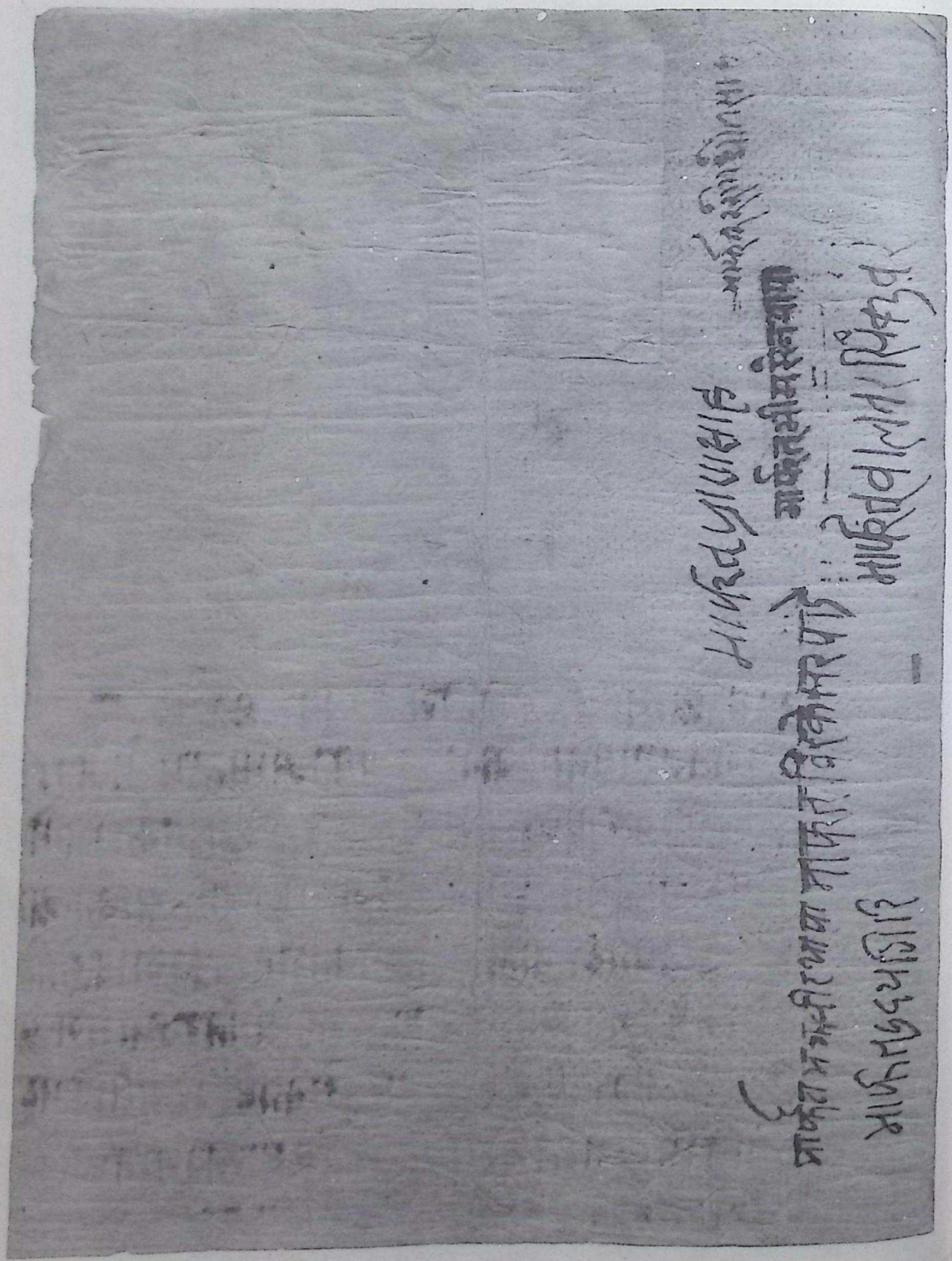
Document - B (backside)



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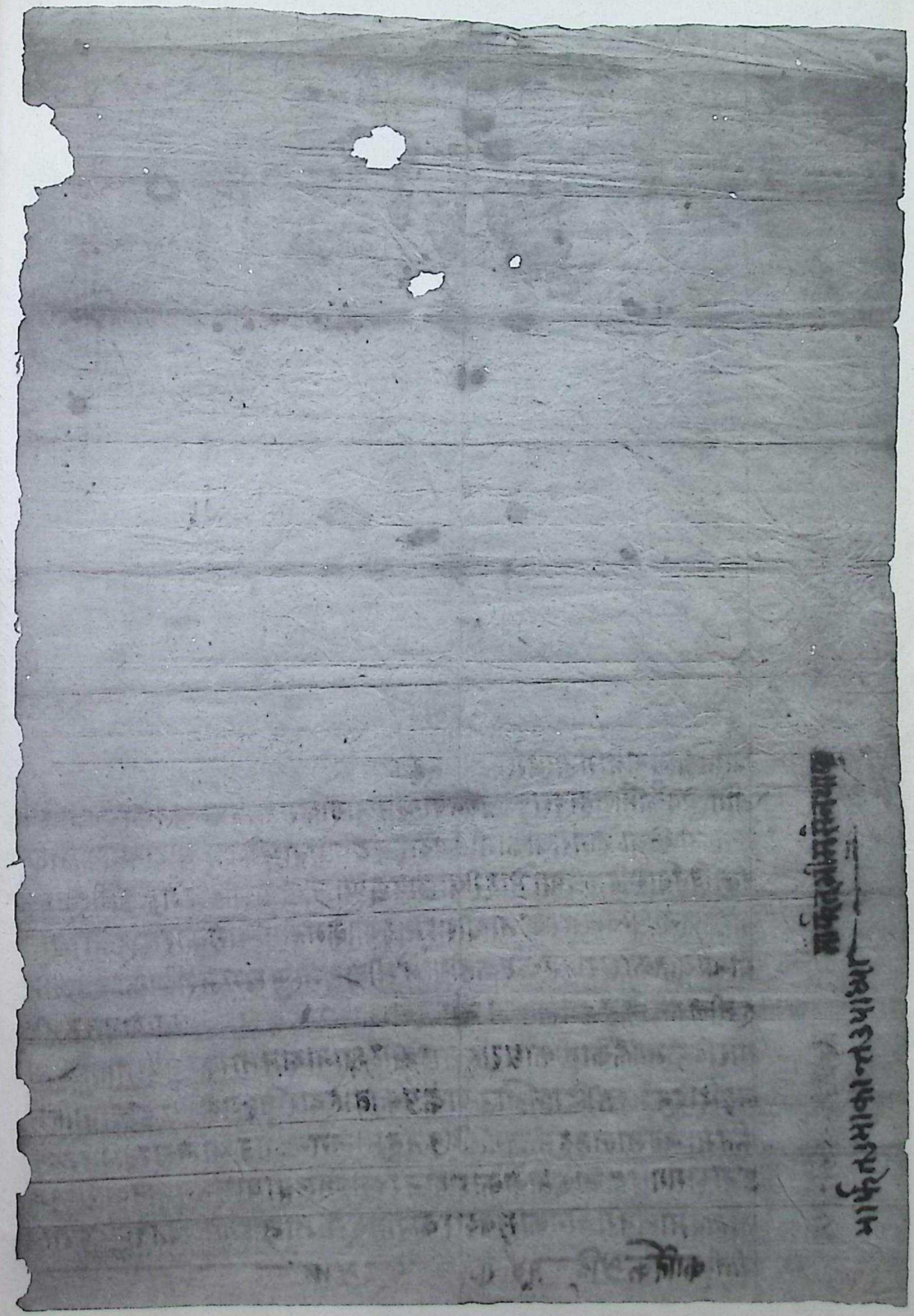
Document - C (backside)



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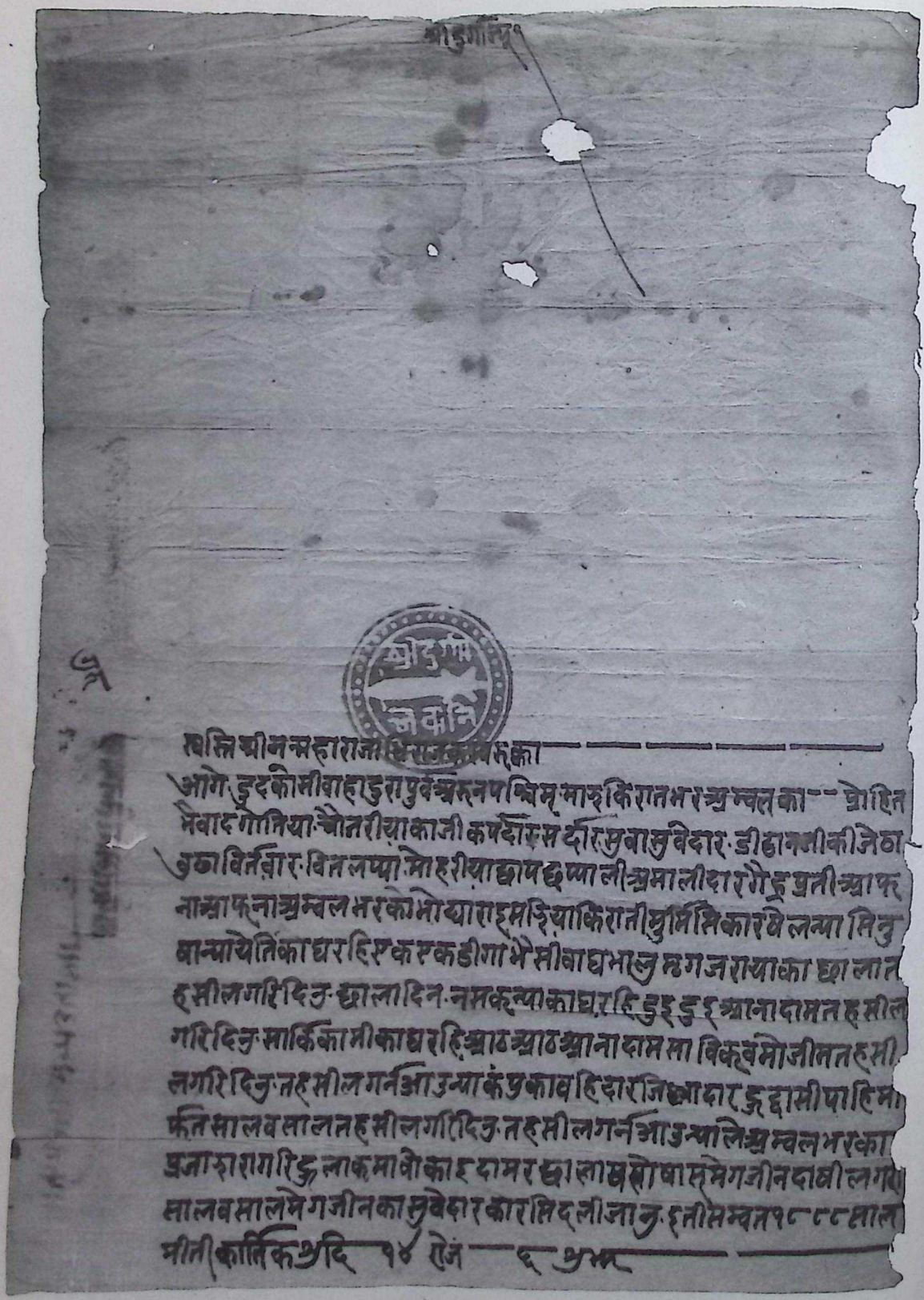
Document - C



Himalayan Culture Vol. IV, No. 1, May-August 1998

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Document - C[a]

Particulars :

Handwritten on Nepali paper (daphne cannabina)
Original size : 29 cm. (length) x 20 cm. (width)
Actual text written on : 17.2 cm. (length) x 12.5 cm. (width)
Nature of document : Kasyā Rukkā. To levy a tax on Hunting in Mājh Kirāt.
Addressee : Bhoghā Rāī
Date of issue : 1888 VS (1831)

Transcription/Transliteration :

srī durgā jiū

(A Royal Seal containging:)[b]
srī durgā
(Sword Emblem)
bhawānī

svasti srī manmāhārājadhirajakasyarukkā - - - - -
āge dudhkosī vāhādurā purwa arun pascim māj̣h kirāt bhar amval ka - - prohit bhaivad[c] gotiyā. cautrīyā kājī kapardār. sardār. subbā subedār. dithānajaki jeṭhā budhā birtavār. vitalappā[d]. moharīyā chāp chappāli amālidār gairah pratī āph nā āphnā amval bharko bhogā rāī majhiyā kirāti murmi sikār khelynā sinu khanyā yetikā gharhi ek ek digā bhaisi bāgh bhālu mṛga jarāyā kā chālā ta hasil gari dinu. chālā dina nasaknyā kā gharhi duī duī ānā dām tahasil gari dinu. sārki kāmi ka gharhi ātha ātha ānā dām sāvik vamojim tahasi l gari dinu. tahasil garna āunyā kampu kā vahidār jihmmādār[e] huddā sipāhi mā rphat sālvsāl tahasil gari dinu. tahasil garnà āunyā le amval bharkā prajā jhārā gari hulāk mā bokāi dām ra chālā khasokhās megjīn dākhīl gari[f] sālvasāl megjīn kā subedār kā rasid lī jānu. īti samvat 1888 sāl mītī kārtik sudi 14 roj 6 subham̐ - -

Content on the back :

mārphat : bhim sen thāpā[g]
mārphat : umā kānt upādhyā

(a) Cf. Risiram Arjel : Bhoghā Rāī Majhiyā Kirātiko Nām Rukkā, *Mājh Kirāt*, p. 42.
(b) See Document - A, Notes (d)
(c) Risiram Arjel's rendering of *bhaivād* as *bhaiyād* is complicated. *Mājh Kirāt*, p. 42.
(d) Risiram Arjel's rendering of *vitlappa* too seems inconsistent. (Ibid).
(e) Scribe's caligraphy is not clearly discernible, however, Risiram's adoption may not be wholly inaccurate. *Mājh Kirāt*, p. 43.
(f) The word *gar* (for *gari*) seems to be an error. Ibid.
(g) See Document - B, Notes (e),

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Document - D[a]

Particulars :

Handwritten on Nepali paper (daphne cannabina)
Original size : 32.5 cm. (length) x 22.7 cm. (width)
Actual text written on : 17.2 cm. (length) x 12.5 cm. (width)
Nature of document : Kasyā Rukkā. Royal decree confirming Rāī Pagari or title on five Individuals in Dilpā, Māj̣h Kirāt.
Addressee : Satpā, Jaganpā, Dev Siṅ, Abhinpā, and Jagat Siṅ Rāī.
Date of issue : 1902 VS (1845)

Transcription/Transliteration :

srī durgā jiū

(A Royal Seal containging:)[b]
srī durgā
(Sword Emblem)
bhawānī

svasti srī manmāhārājadhirajakasyarukkā-----
āge satpā[c] jaganpā[d] dev siṅ abhinapā[e] jagat siṅ ke aghi hāmrā māj̣h kirāt dilpākā rāī giri kā pagari hāmi 5 janāu̐ hāmile āphnā āphnā pagari bhitra ko doko boko gari āphnā pagari bhītra kā jaggā kamāi khāyākā thiuṅ. ājā hāmi pagari pagari na mildā merā bhāgmā[f] arko[g] calan garna āyo arkā kā bhāgmā calan garna gayeoṅ hāmi le āphai vithiti gareoṅ. āba upranta thiti ko lāl mohar gari vaksyā. āphnā pagari bhi tra kā bhāg mā lāgyā kā jāgga ko calan gari amāli ko dāmkām bujhāu̐da hau bhani ji hmādārsanga karāu̐dā ra jihmādār harule ṛukkā gari daphdar khānāmā pathāu̐dā daphdār khā nā mārphat hāmrā hajur mā binti pardā jāher bhayo. aba uprānt yekā pagarile arkā pagari ko jaggāmā calan na garnu āphnā āphnā bhāg pagari bhitrakā jaggāko calan[h] gari. amālīko dāmkām. garnu bhanyā thiti vandej. vādhi āphnā āphnā bhāg ko. lāl. mohor gari vakseoṅ. jasle āphnā bhāg dekhi. arkāko bhāg calan garnā mā paslā. taslāi ḍanḍa samet parlā. āphnā khātir jamāsanga. āphnā āphnā bhā g ko calan gari amāliko dāmkām gar. īti samvat 1902 sāl miti māgh vadi 9 roj 4 subham - - - - - - - - - - - - - -

Content on the back : mārphat : gagan sing

(a) Cf. Risiram Arjel: Rāī Pagariko Bāntphānt, *Māj̣h Kirāt*, pp 43,44.
(b) Document - A, See Notes (d).
(c) (d) To read *Satpā*, *Jaganpā* and *Abhinpā* as *Satyā*, *Jaganyā* and *Abhinyā* in Risiram Arjel's edition appear to be a mistake.
(e) Arjel's understanding of the caligraphic style of scribe is limited. There appear distinctiveness in rendering *pā* and *yā* in the writing style of the scribe.
(f) In Risiram's edition, it is spelled as *nāmmā* [=in (my) name] which is deviating from the original term and meaning i.e. *bhāg mā* meaning [in (my) share].
(g) In simlar manner, *le* is added to *arkā* by Risiram Arjel, though this does not transmute the meaning.
(h) This underlined sentence is not accounted for in the Risiram Arjel's edition.

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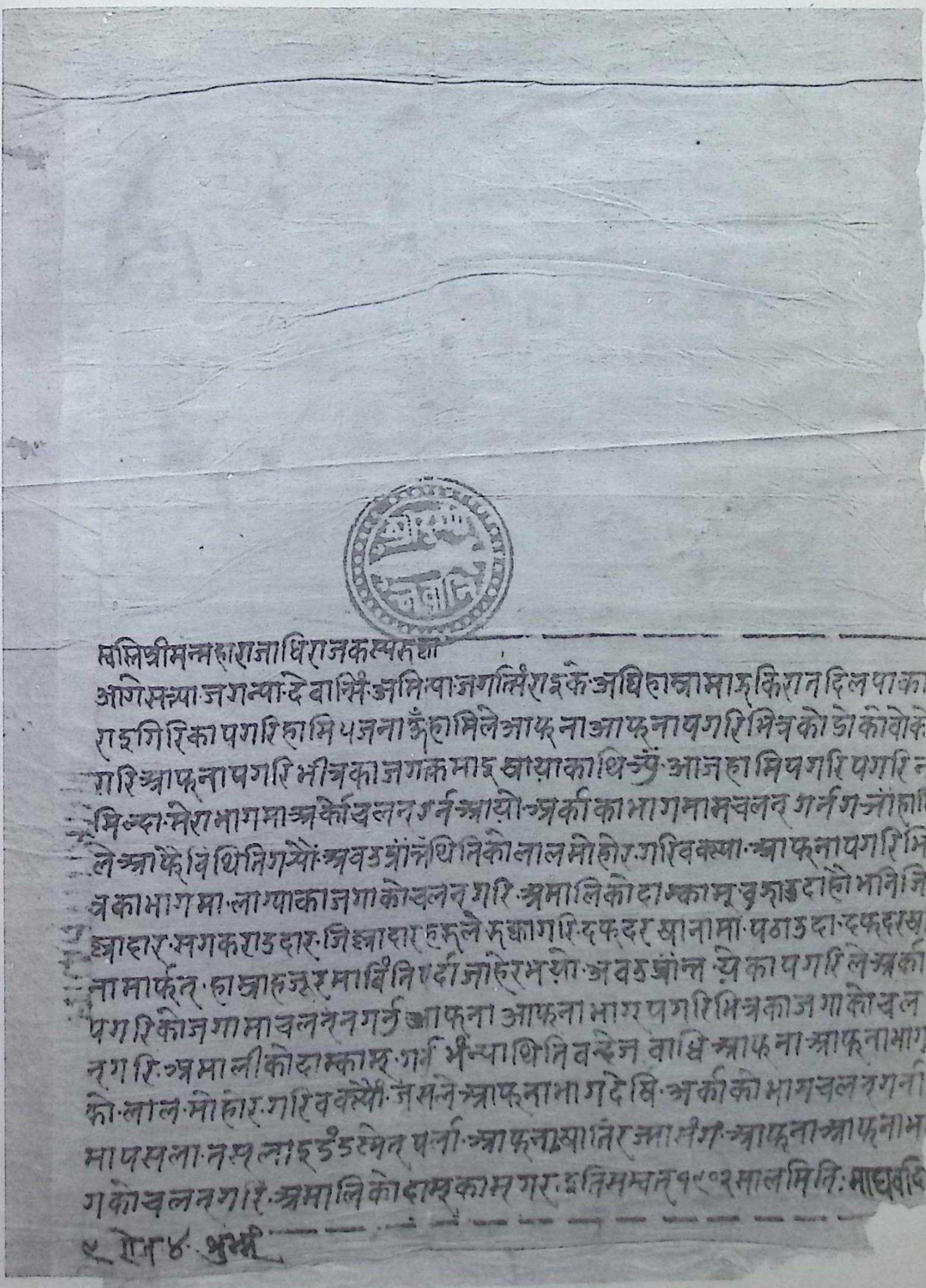
Document - D



स्वस्तिश्रीमन्महाराजाधिराजकस्यरुक्का
आगे सन्त्या जगन्यादेवा श्री अतिपाजगत्सिं राइ के अधिहाम्रा माझकिरान दिलपाका
राइ गिरिका पगरि हामि पजनाऊँ हामिले आफना आफना पगरिभित्र को डो को वोके
गरि आफना पगरि भीत्र का जगा माइ खायाका थियौं आज हामि पगरि पगरि न
मिल्दा मेरा भाग मा अर्कोले चलन गर्न आयो अर्का का भाग मा म चलन गर्न गयो हामि
ले आफै विथिति गर्यौं अव उप्रान्त थिति को लाल मोहोर गरि वक्स्या आफना पगरिभि
त्र का भाग मा लाग्या का जगा को चलन गरि अमालि को दाम्का मू वुझाउदा होभानी जि
म्माहार मगकराउदार जिम्मादार हरूले रुक्का गरि दफ्दर खानामा पठाउदा दफ्दरखा
ना मार्फत हाम्रा हजुर मा विन्ति पर्दा जाहेर भयो अव उप्रान्त ये का पगरि ले अर्का
पगरि को जगा मा चलन नगर्नु आफना आफना भाग पगरि भित्र का जगा को चल
न गरि अमाली को दाम्का म गर्न भन्या थिति वन्देज वाधि आफना आफना भाग
को लाल मोहोर गरि वक्स्यौं जसले आफना भाग देखि अर्का को भाग चलन गर्नी
मा पसला नसल्लाइ डंड स्मेत पर्ला आफना खातिर जमा सीग आफना आफना भा
ग को चलन गरि अमालि को दाम्कामस गर इति सम्वत १९०२ साल मिति माघवदि
९ रोज ४ शुभम्

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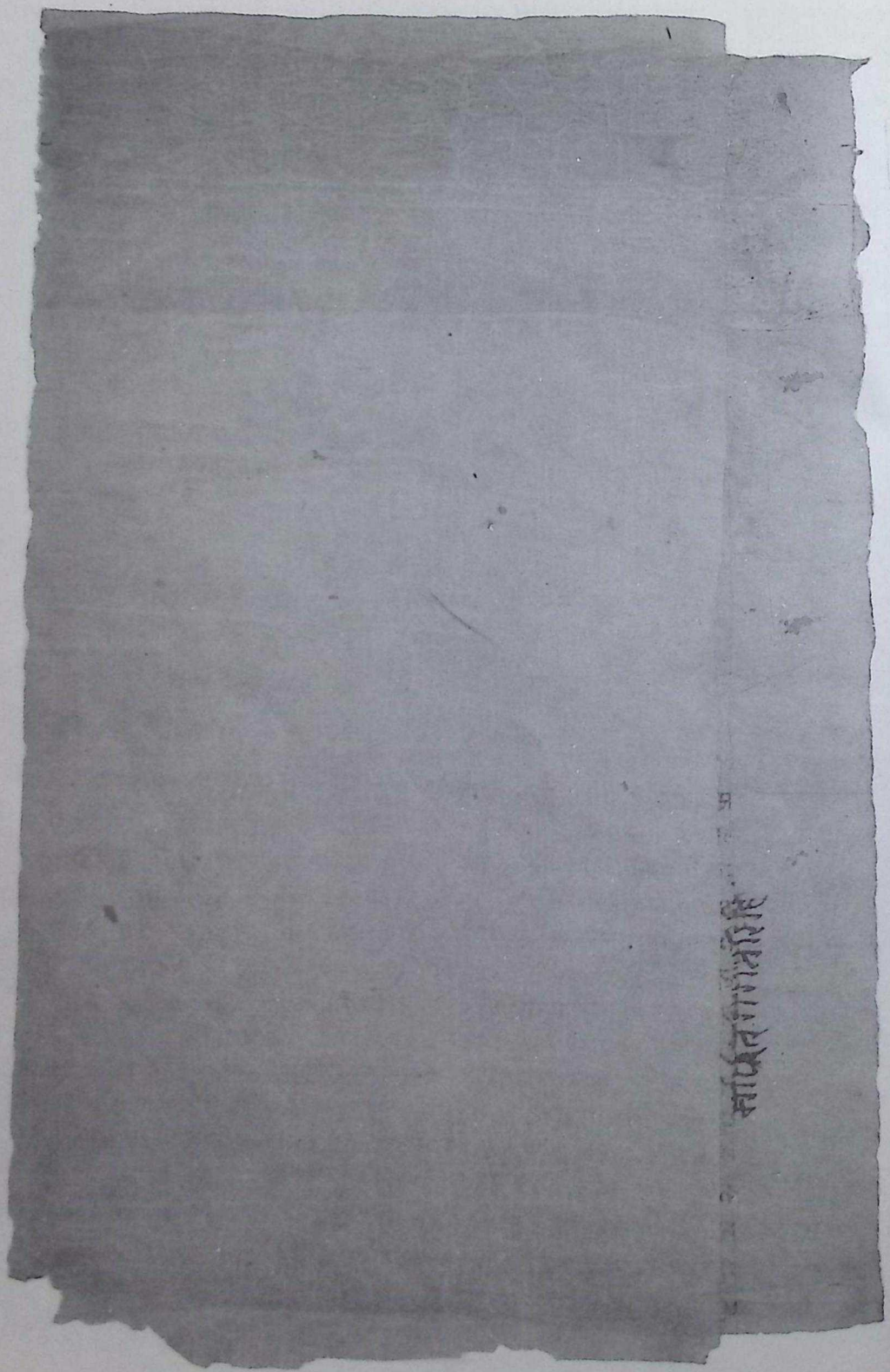
Document - D (backside)



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Religious Minorities and Identity Crisis: The Context of Nepali Muslims

Shanker Thapa

The minority religious groups face various problems where majority culture plays vital role in accelerating changes or forces to adopt various other tenets. In this case, the minority feels the need to protect the markers of identity. The term identity itself is interpreted as positive and negative identity. The positive identity intends to protect situations or factors which contributes to prolonged continuity of identity markers without any undesired changes in it. It always remains as the positive force even in the development of minotites and continues their existence without any threat from outside. The religion and religious culture of minorities found on the verge of disintegration is unfriendly to the positive identity (Thapa, 1997:36-37). It is related to the negative identity in one way or another. Both of such situations need to be analysed which obviously leads to analysis of identity phenomenon. The Muslims living in the remote villages in the western hill region witnessed rapid changes in their religion and culture under the influence of the majority Hindu culture group. The penetration of Hindu belief and behaviour in the life of minorities compelled the hill Muslims to adopt Hindu names and some aspects of Hindu culture and belief (Siddika, 1991: 260-270). This trend of cultural influences has seriously influenced the identity of the hill Muslims in Nepal. The general isolation of Muslim minorities in the hills from Gorkha to Baitadi district and their deteriorated knowledge of Arabic language, the holy Quran and Islamic theology further reduced their ingenious culture to minimum. They did very little to propagate the faith. The inaccessibility to religious facilities and lack of interaction with the Ulemas for centuries has helped develop an assimilative character among the hill Muslims, whereas this situation completely lacked amoung the terai Muslims. Therefore, the regional differences among the Muslims in Nepal contributes to origionate regional version of Islam in Nepal. The Islamic culture in terai still remains as a prototype of Indian mainstream Muslim culture. In general, Islam in Nepal is considered as ethnic religion of Indian migrants or their descendants without making any inroads into the population of other ethnic groups and indegenous people. So, Islam is now confined only to the Indian Muslim migrants or their descendants. A religion in isolation looses most of its components of identification. The absence of Muslim nestorians to propagate the faith and convert native people to Islam was a compulsion because they were restricted to initiate missionary activities (Thapa, 1997:1-20). However, they were permitted to observe religion, as a result, the first mosque was established in Kathmandu to serve the religious needs of the Muslim society. The regime also provided support to them (Banu, 1980: 31-35). But, this situation compelled them to survive in the midst of the majority group culture. So, they appeared to be a small group incapable of exerting a major influence.

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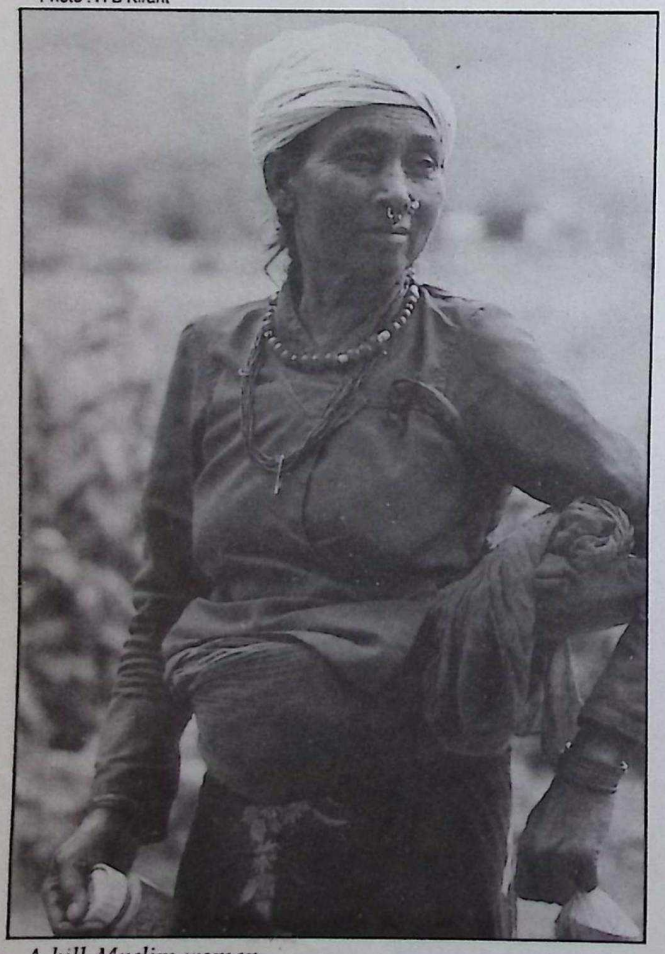
They remained mainly as the 'satellite culture' of India's mainstream Deobard Muslim culture. Even in this kind of cases, the name of religion itself remains as an important hall mark of their communal identity (Ching, 1993: 102-185). The Muslims in the hills in general were refrained from proselytizing efforts. Their relatively small number and long association with the native culture is the main reason for them to accept the Hindu Culture of the hills.

Photo : H B Kirant



A hill Muslim woman

In this context, the conceptual framework of identity of minority religious groups can be analyzed in different ways on the basis of prevailing circumtances. The identity paradigm is a device to understand minorities, analyse identity behaviour and determine their status in a plural society. In the case of Nepali Muslims, the historical connection with the Muslims of Kashmir or other northern Indian states are of great importance while analyzing them on identity paradigm (Thapa, 1985: 24-26). Infact, the historical aspect and their entire activities and behaviour of a minority group attaches great importance to the identity of the minorities. The functioning of the group as a whole, their problems in the society and interaction with other religious groups also can not be overlooked while dealing with their identity. All of religious activities and cultural pattern aims at discussing collective identity of the minorities. The conceptual basis and crisis of identity in the context of Nepali Muslims, is based on the theory of the 'identity model' of religion as propounded by Hans Mol (1979:11-13). Here the identity markers are not given preference to deal with rather it emphasizes the inner expression of the term 'identity' as a body of meaning which explains the identity of the minority group as a whole in providing the meaning of their existence in the majority influenced society. This is the device to analyse the entire situation under which identity of a minor group can be analyzed. For the purpose of our interpretation, the religion itself is defined as whatever sacralizes identity or a system of meaning to be connoted in terms of religious belief. So, religions in this context, is the process of sacralization and meaning which is derived from the belief system. The meaning of identity as such is related to the terminologies such as stability, integration of traits and limitation around the unit in question. Its

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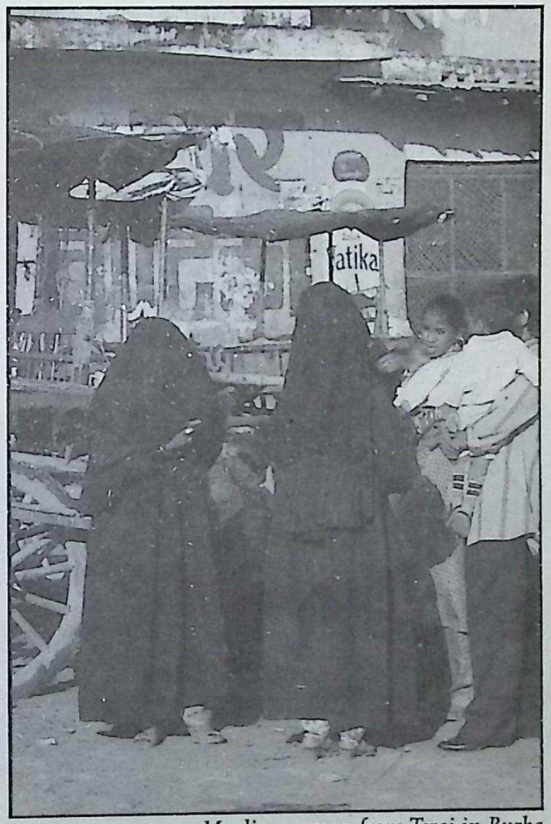
explanation finally refers to identity of individuals, group or groups as a whole. Therefore, identity as such has something to do with tendency towards these components. On the other hand, it presents interplay of society and religio - cultural reality in the context of minority identity consolidation and links itself to national integration in one way or another under the blanket term-identity.

The identity in a broader perspective is the wholeness of a person which attempts to be and remain as well functioning unit within the sphere of religious behaviour. So, an effective attempt is required to conceive problems associated with the components of identification in the society as a religious group. The human behaviour tends to contribute to the maintenance of the wholeness. Unlike animals, the human beings are engaged in bolstering their wholeness by learning appropriate methodology of effectively reacting to the sources of change or situation threatening to their identity wholeness. The consciousness among the group members to maintain identity through different activities lead to mitigate negative aspects of changes or react to its results (Thapa, 1985: 38-40). During the course of survival as minority and maintenance of socio-cultural entity thereby leading to identity as a whole, the minor religious groups have always better chances than that of individual's identity. But it does not reduce the role of an individual member in the society to maintain stability or integration of traits. The tendency of a religious minority or culture group to maintain sameness or stability and tendency towards chnages are purely the logical categories. The conceptual frame in this connection is the balance between tendency towards stability or changes and existence of this balance as equilibrium between these two opposite dialectics. In this situation, acceleration in changes is obviously mean disintegration and too much

Photo : Mani Lama



Muslim woman from Terai in Burka

sameness is the loss of adaptability. The hill and terai Muslims in Nepal are examples of disintegration of cultural tenets and loss of adaptability respectively. The hill Muslims adapted rapid changes in religion and culture. They borrowed such tenets, practices and beliefs from the local Hindu cultures which were never the part of their religion and culture. The inaccessibility of religious facilities is the main reason for this kind of disintegration of culture. At the same time, the traditional type of integration of terai Muslims with their counterparts beyond the Nepali border contributed

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to maintain traditional culture and religion. Consequently, they lost adaptability in cultural behaviour. A balance between disintegration and adaptability may contribute to identity. In the process of understanding particular religio-cultural minority identity, changes and dialectic are particular conceptual bases for forming basic frame of reference. The excessive part of either sameness or changes brings about weakness in the identity process. Too much changes obviously disintegrates such religio - cultural elements which always remain vital in the identification process of a minority groups. The sacralization process in religion is further supported by elements on which structural basis of identity is constructed. The protection of identity features of minorities from undesired changes remains pivotal due to sacralization process (Mol, 1979: 13-14). In old religions, various social or cultural features are imbedded deeply and religious tenets are present in the form of belief of the people. This situation is just reversed in newly proselytized societies. The converted Muslims in Korea and Japan could not devote fully to the newly adopted faith due to their failure to extricate from influences of previous belief system (Thapa, 1989: 64-82). This kind of situation is not exactly applicable to the Nepali Muslims. Even in the case of excessive changes or disintegration of culture, they countinue to be the Muslims. Of course, they repose their faith in Allah as the almighty and creator of everything (The Holy Kuran). At the sametime, the Islamic fundamentalism also remained a vital force to determine their growth and existence in the plural society such as Nepal. In the context of Nepali Muslims, it is noteworthy that they are provided with better opportunity for growth and religious freedom in all ages irrespective of doctrines, sects such as Shia and Sunni and sub-sects such as Hanfi, Safei, Maliki, Hanbali, Barailee, Deobandi and Wahabi.

Photo : H B Kirant

An example of cultural assimilation : Non-Muslim women also worship Taziya

Nepali Muslims and Identity Crisis:

The regional variation in the degree of faith, practices and existing cultural conditions always remains decisive in the identity phenomenon. This kind of variation leads to originate varied form of identity crisis. The existence and identity of hill Muslims is connected with the impact of Hinduism and assimilated cultural forms (Thapa, 1989: 41). Thus, the identity in the changed cultural context requires to examine all of the impact and influences of local cultures which accelerated changes in the basic form of Muslim culture.

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The analysis of identity features of minorities in the conceptual level requires to deal with different situation related to it. Some factor still remain vital and significant which require further analysis. The Muslims of Nepal living in different geographical regions have been facing various problems of identity. The majority chauvinism remains decisive in minority behaviour. So, following factors are decisive in order to evaluate the nature of crisis of identity of Nepali Muslims.

— The loss of adaptability and disintegration of cultural traits plays vital role in the identity of Neplali Muslims.

— The religious commitment , attitude of Muslims and differences of opinion between the Muslims living in varied geographical regions.

— The exact nature of religious activities of Muslims minorities.

— The factors which effect to maintain sameness, wholeness and boundary within the religious culture.

— The nature and dynamics of change and interrelation activities and its impact in the minority culture, and

— Operating of sacralization in religious behaviour of minorities in the broader perspective with reference to objectification, commitment, ritual actions and myth.

These are the factors which further help to analyse identity crisis among the Muslim minorities in Nepal. In the absence of analysis of these bases, identity of particular group can not be interpreted hence, these factors are crucial in the identity of the Muslim minorities. At the same time, there are some other factors such as interaction between various groups of Muslims, Dawah activities, functional role of Masjid and minority Hindu chauvinism, etc. are important in the identity of Muslim minority. These factors bear strong socio-religious connotations to approach the inside of the minority identity structure.

The identity of Muslim minorities in non-Muslim societies such as in Nepal is required to analyse on the basis of theoretical framework. In this connection, their history, status, activities and institutionalization can be discussed. The concepts of Islamization and delslamizatioin are also very important concepts. The minorities share separate religion and culture. The Muslims share universal religion and cultural pattern. But the regional variation of Muslim ethnicity has created and established various identical features beyond Islamic principles. This is equally true among the Nepali Muslims. Even the Muslims living in varied geographical regions have specific religious or cultural features. It has immense impact and significance in the study of the Muslim minorities. Following situations remain decisive in the minority behaviour and identification process, especially the Muslims living in non-Muslim societies.

— The majority religion, culture pattern, way of thinking and ideas all have chauvinistic attitude or penetrating tendency against the minor indegeous cultures and religious forms.

A general process of minority identification must be given adequate importance and the process as such, must be undertaken by the members of the particular minorities themselves in order to facilitate their existence, survival and maintain cultural ingredients which later integrates into identity phenomenon.

— The liberal or strict attitude of religious or individual member in dogmatic interpretation of religion, growing affluence, traditional type of living and accessibility to religious facilities also play significant role in the context of minority identity; and

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— The growing fundamentalism among the minorities or retaliation against it plays an equally important role in this context.

The growth of fundamentalism among the religious groups in Nepal specially the Muslims minorities has not been taken as a good sign by other religious groups in the country. The communal riots created in different parts of the country since late fifties until now, did not create any positive results for their own community. Even the Islamic fundamentalism in Nepal came to encounter with the newly formed Shiv Sena, the Hindu militant groups. This is in no way productive choice in minority identity. So in this condition they are required to reconcile with the majority. The Nepali society has provided them with full freedom of religion. The Muslim minorities in Nepal are very much influenced by the majority Hindu culture. At the same time, their attitude towards other cultures, extra territorial loyalty, growing fundamentalism, low frequency of interaction with the Hindus and their institutions, etc. influenced identity behaviour. This situation forbade them from having reconciliation with the majority groups thereby creating an atmosphere of distrust and cultural enmity. The Muslim religious authorities such as the Ulemas are now required to transform theocratic principles and dogmatic religion into the people's religion to make it more popular and facilitate to maintain its proper identity. A minor religion needs to develop and blend together with the local taste, which corresponds with the social dynamism to move with the tune of time. But factors like failure, alienation and deprivation in all sections of the society need further analysis because they weaken factors supporting identity. It helps to find out such factors related to the identity problems. So, analysis in the context of the Nepali Muslims helps to understand problems of Muslim minorities in the Hindu Kingdom.

The Muslim traditionalists are often taken as fundamentalists in terms of religious behaviours and as militants as a religious group. The majority chauvinism has created negative

Photo : H B Kirant

Newly rebuilt Nepali Jame Masjid in Kathmandu

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impacts in minority identity. Thus, the new Hindu Chauvinism or Hindu fundamentalism is completely negative to identity phenomenon of the Muslims minority in Nepal. The religious fundamentalism as such does not function positively in the identity crisis. The Muslims living in different geographical regions in Nepal differ to each other to some extent. It has direct impact on extension of cultural roots in the society. The adaptation to local conditions, faith, attitude etc. are still significant in the life of community members. It is very difficult perhaps, impossible to analyze the entire situation pertaining to identity and nature of crisis in identity without exploring the minds of people and their vision. Therefore, religious commitment of community members and the ways of maintaining separate identity of Muslims in the Nepali society are significant in the identity of the Muslims minorities.

Likewise, the conceptual basis of Islamization and delslamization are very significant in this context. The connotations of these terminologies are very much crucial to the existence of the Muslim minorities in non-Muslim societies. The Islamization is concerned with broadening the horizon of belief and practices thereby adapting its tenets in this context. It is further explained as institutionalization of religious components or tenets, and its immense impact on the mass culture. It denotes to a process of societal change along the religious line (Noon, 1997: 124). This kind of change is favourable to religious growth in non Islamic society. It can be identified as an endeavour to reestablish Islamic values, practices, Islamic institutions and Islamic legal aspects, etc. in the lives of Muslims everywhere and an attempt to recreate Islamic ethos (Muzaffar, 1987: 150). Islamization thus, appears to be purely religious and based on religious postulates. This concept remains very significant in plural societies such as Nepal where minority Muslims intends to recreate Islamic values and ethos.

Islam is a proselytizing religion from the early period. The Prophet of Allah and other followers who embraced Islam did not hesitate to propagate the faith against its fearful odds. Since 630 A.D. the growing superiority of Islam and of course, the political superiority was mainly responsible for its dissemination. By the end of this century, Islam became one of the major world religions and expanding in almost all the countries of the world. Islam has 500 years old history in Nepal. So, the process of Islamization or delslamization underwent different stages and phases in the history of Islam. Islam found favourable situation to survive in Nepal, but at the sametime, the Muslim minorities mainly in the remote hill villages and to some extent in Kathmandu valley witnessed a gradual process of deislamization during the course of centuries old history. It disintegrated ingenous religious tenets and further led to create identity crisis. On the contrary, the Muslims in Nepal Terai villages have favourable chances to observe there religion and a continued process of Islamization in the region has also contributed to the progress of the religion. Thus the cultural identity of the hill Muslim has been on the verge of disintegration. Thus, the task of Islamization to maintain continuity of their religion and culture in the true sense, is lacking in those Muslim settlements in the hills. The Hindu penetration or domination during a long history created some negative impacts on their religious and

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Photo : H B Kirant

An aged Muslim from Terai in casual dress

cultural activities or behaviour. In reality, the hill Muslims freely borrowed Hindu cultural tenets in their belief system in that they even borrowed the Hindu names under the penetrating strength of Hinduism. Although the hill Muslims are faithful to their religion, a massive activity, Dawah interaction with the Ummah and religious experts, Madarsa for religious education and establishment of the religious centers, etc. are lacking in those areas. Although Muslim culture in hill villages has been disintegrating, Islam in Nepal has a rich philosophical tradition and a large mass of dedicated followers. Infact, this kind of situation has enduring consequences on progress, existence and identity of the Nepalise Muslim.

The mind of the minorities, their perception of religious dedication and faith, etc. lead towards the exact nature of identity. Hence, these elements as well as the perceptions of Nepali Muslims living in different geographical regions, are factors vital to the identity process. The differences between Muslims in different regions in Nepal is further accelerated by degree of access to religious facilities such as opening of Madars, Islamic centers, Dawah activities, Muslim social organizations and welfare centres, etc. This kind of dissimilarity has also created impact on identity of the Muslim minority in the country.

The identity crisis among the Muslim minority in newly proselytized societies is contrasting to that of Nepali Muslims because the later have centuries old history in Nepal. The approach is totally different in this context because Islam in Nepal is deep rooted, whereas Islam in the newly converted societies such as Japan and Korea, it is not (Thapa, 1989: 64-84). Therefore the basic nature of identity and other socio-religious problems varies owing to this situation.

Regarding the identity of the minorities, the professional or other types of religious and social organizations also play important role. In Nepal, there are different kinds of such organizations related to religion in one way or another. The Anjuman Islah was the first of its kind established in 1941. Since then, a large number of organizations are established at the central or local level. Almost all such organizations of the Muslims are religiously motivated and committed for the cause of the religion. Although, many of these organizations remained inactive after the inception, some are

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found to be very active in attaining their goal. Moreover, availability of fund extended to them by international associations of similar nature from the Islamic countries helps them to achieve set goals and give continuity to their sustainable existence. Infact, growth of those organizations create great sociological impact on the identity of the Nepali Muslims as a religious minority. Some of those organizations are active in the welfare of the Muslims in Nepal. But regarding the activities of propagation of religion or publicity of dogmatic philosophy, those organizations could not come out in favour of the minority hill Muslim villages where their presence is desired.

It is import to note that the Hindus in Nepal know less about Islam and its culture although it has a long history. The complex social system of the Hindus and orthodox attitude of the Hindu philosophy regarded the Muslim as untouchable impure caste (Thapa, 1995: 78-87). They are not permitted to dine with the high caste Hindus or enter into the their houses; the latter sometimes asperge their body with water at mere the touch of Muslims (Gaboriean, 1976: 85-105).

The Hindu-Muslim rivalry is relevant and noteworthy. The growth of Islamic fundamentalism in South Asia need not be the part of Islamization process if the Muslim society tends to create positive impacts on human wellbeing in general. In general, the Nepali Muslims are not only moderate in practical aspect of religion and culture but, they are prone to cultural assimilation with the main stream Nepali culture. Even if they resist the out side influences, they are not successful in the attempt whereas the majority Hindu culture has been sucessful in transmitting various elements into the Muslim culture. It has been a general phenomenon that all socio-religious organizations of minorities in the developing and affluent societies, are embarking on sacred goals. But their devotion to religion and interaction with their own community members is important in the steady growth of the religion. The other important factor to take into consideration is that the religious simplicity of Islam should not resolve to dogmatic rigidity, or else certain problems are likely to occur in the identity phenomenon. The general attitude of the Hindu majority towards the Muslim minority and Islam is a crucial factor to the process of identity, and to the setting up a cultural goal. Not only Islam is considered as a foregin religion, the minority Muslim too are lacking for proper religious observences and faith in Allah. The crisis of identity of Muslims in Islamic and non-Islamic societies are different in nature (Ahsan, 1987-78:123).

The identity remains more important among the Muslims in non-Muslim societies such as in Nepal than in the Islamic countries. In Nepal, the lack of Islamic education creates various problems. The crisis continued with the spread of western education in the society adding further confusion to identity crisis (Graunebaum, 1962:249-288). The Muslim minority in Nepal lacked cultural integrity particularly in the hills. In fact, culture disintegration is considered as opposed to positive identity. In the Nepali society where Muslims have long history, various factors led to widen gap between traditional and modern Muslim culture, and between the elite Ulema and the ordinary Muslims (Rehman, 1982:48-49). Such differences surely affects the identity process of the minority Muslim groups in Nepal.v

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जातीय सङ्गीतशास्त्र र नेपाली सङ्गीत

रामशरण दर्नाल

सङ्गीत अध्ययन क्रममा जबदेखि मैले Ethnomusicology बारे थाहा पाएँ त्यही बेलादेखि म यसको नेपाली नामकरण खोज्दै थिएँ। यस सिलसिलामा धेरै अंग्रेजी-नेपाली कोशहरु पल्टाएँ तर, तिनमा यो शब्द (Ethnomusicology) ले प्रवेश पाइसकेको रहेनछ। हालै मात्र नेपाल राजकीय प्रज्ञा प्रतिष्ठानले डा. चुडामणि बन्धुद्वारा सम्पादित एउटा कोश प्रकाशित गरको छ। "आधारभुत प्राविधिक शब्दावली" (वि.सं. २०५२) नामक सो कोशमा Ethnomusicology शब्दले प्रवेश पाएको रहेछ। यस शब्दको नेपाली नामकरण पनि भएको रहेछ - 'जातीय सङ्गीतशास्त्र'। यस विषयमा केही भाषाविद र कोशकारहरुसँग पनि परामर्श गरें। एकजना विशेषज्ञले Ethnomusicology लाई नेपालीकरण गर्दा 'जातीय सङ्गीतशास्त्र' सटिक हुने कुरा बताउनु भयो भने अर्का विशेषज्ञले सरल र सहज रुपमा Ethnomusicology को नेपाली नामाकरण "जनजातीय संङ्गीतशास्त्र" ठीक होला भन्ने राय व्यक्त गर्नु भयो। दुवै विशिष्ट भाषाविदको सुझावलाई शिरोधार्य गर्दै दुवै नामाकरणको नजीक परेको नाम "आधारभूत प्राविधिक शब्दावलीमा" उल्लिखित 'जातीय सङ्गीतशास्त्र' नै यस सन्दर्भमा उपयुक्त नाम होला भन्ने लागेकोले मैले प्रस्तुत लेखमार्फत Ethnomusicology को नेपाली नाम 'जातीय सङ्गीतशास्त्र' नै ठीक होला भनी उपयोग गरेको छु।[१] मैले यही नेपाली नाम ठीक हो भनी ठोकुवा गरिसकेको छैन। यसको अझवढी उपयुक्त र सटिक नेपाली नामको लागि ढोका खुला नै राखेको छु। यो भन्दा राम्रो नेपाली नाम प्राप्त भएमा यसमा संशोधन गर्न कुनै कठिनाइ पर्ने छैन। यसर्थ Ethnomusicology को अर्को नेपाली नाम प्राप्त नहुन्जेल 'जातीय सङ्गीतशास्त्र'लाई नै मानेर यो लेख अगाडि बढाउने जमर्को गर्दैछु। यसो त 'जातीय सङ्गीतशास्त्र' शब्दले आफ्नो अस्तित्व कायम गरेको धेरै भएको छैन। Hamlyn Illustrated Encyclopedia of Music को संक्षिप्त विवरण अनुसार – 'The Comparative study of the music of world cultures in relation to their Anthropological and historical development. Originally (with 1880's) known as comperative musicology, the disicipline was renamed ethnomusicology in the 1930's by Jaap Kunst, a specialist in the music of Indonesia (1990:117).

Ethnomusicology बारे सबै अंग्रेजी शब्दकोशहरुमा धेरथोर प्रकाश पारिएको छ। तर यस बारे सबभन्दा बढी विवरण सङ्गीतकलाको विश्वकोश मानिने MacMillan प्रकाशनको Grove Dictionary of Music and Musicians (1995:275) मा पढ्न सकिन्छ। यस पछि Harvard Dictionary of Music (1962:298) मा राम्रो उल्लेख गरिएको छ। सङ्गीतका अध्येताहरुले तिनैलाई आधार मान्ने गरेका छन्। संयुक्त राज्य अमेरिकाबाट Ethnomusicology नामक पत्रिका प्रकाशित हुन्छ भन्ने थाहा पाइन्छ तर, सो पत्रिका नेपालमा देख्न पाइएको छैन। शब्दकोशहरुमा जातीय सङ्गीतशास्त्र बारे विवरण पाइएता पनि जातीय सङ्गीतशास्त्रमै लेखिएका पुस्तकहरु भने ज्यादै सिमित देखिन्छन्। संगीत अन्वेषक तथा संगीतशास्त्री कुन्स्ट् ज्यापले (१९५९:१२) हेगबाट प्रकाशित गरेको Ethnomusicology विषयक यो पुस्तक निक्कै उपयोगी प्रामाणिक छ। यस पछि जातीय सङ्गीतशास्त्र मा अरु पनि पुस्तक प्रकाशनमा आएका छन्। जातीय सङ्गीतशास्त्र शब्द र ग्रन्थका लागि कुन्स्ट ज्यापलाई विश्वसङ्गीतले सदा स्मरण गर्नेछ। सङ्गीत जगत्मा उनी अमर रहिरहने छन्। Ethnomusicology शब्दको आविष्कार अघि सङ्गीतशास्त्र (Musicology) नै प्रचलित रहँदै आएको थियो। विषयगत रुपमा आफ्नो ठाउँमा Musicology (संङ्गीतशास्त्र) को अस्तित्व कायमै छ। यसको अध्ययन र अन्वेषण प्रशस्त मात्रामा भएको छ। पौर्वात्य र पाश्चात्य सङ्गीत मात्र होइन हिन्दु सङ्गीतशास्त्रसमेतमा प्रशस्त कार्य भएको कुरा सङ्गीतशास्त्रहरुबाट थाहा पाइन्छ। नेपाली सङ्गीतशास्त्र हस्तलिखित ग्रन्थकै रुपमा राष्ट्रिय संग्रालयमा सुरक्षित छन्। तिनलाई प्रकाशमा ल्याउने जमर्को कतैबाट भएको देखिदैन। यसो त सङ्गीतशास्त्र र जातीय सङ्गीतशास्त्र को अलग अलग

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१. यस सन्दर्भमा आफ्नो अमूल्य सुझावका लागि प्रा. बालकृष्ण पोखरेल र डा. माधवप्रसाद पोखरेलमा कृतज्ञता प्रकट नगरि रहन सकिन्न।

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अस्तित्व रहेको छ। नयाँ विषयवस्तु भएकोले सङ्गीतशास्त्र मा जति अध्ययन भएकोछ त्यति अध्ययन जातीय सङ्गीतशास्त्र मा भए जस्तो लाग्दैन तर, यसका सम्भावनाहरु भने प्रशस्त रहेका छन्। विश्वसंगीतमा यसले आफ्नै विशेषता लिन सक्ने कुरामा शंका रहँदैन। नेपाली सङ्गीतको सन्दर्भमा विचार गर्ने हो भने यसको शुभारम्भ यहाँ भरखरै मात्र भएको छ। नेपाली सङ्गीतमा जातीय सङ्गीतशास्त्र अध्ययनका प्रशस्त सम्भावना रहेका छन् तैपनि स्वदेशी तथा विदेशी सङ्गीत अध्येताहरुबाट जे जति प्रयास भएका छन् त्यो कम भन्न सकिदैन। यस सन्दर्भमा सङ्गीतशास्त्र र जातीय सङ्गीतशास्त्र मा तुलनात्मक अध्ययन गरिने हो भने एउटा वृहत ग्रन्थ नै तयार हुन सक्छ। यस विषयमा आजसम्म कुनै ग्रन्थ प्रकाशमा आए जस्तो लाग्दैन। सङ्गीतशास्त्रका अध्येता र अन्वेषकहरुको ध्यान यसतर्फ आकर्षित हुनु जरुरी भइसकेको छ। प्रस्तुत लेखमा केवल 'जातीय सङ्गीतशास्त्र' त्यो पनि नेपाली सङ्गीतशास्त्रको सन्दर्भमात्र लिएर संक्षेपमा भए पनि केही विचार गर्ने जमर्को गरिएको छ।

नेपाली सङ्गीतमा सबभन्दा पहिले 'जातीय सङ्गीतशास्त्र' विषयक कार्यको थालनी वेलायती सङ्गीतशास्त्री डा. अलेक्जेण्डर क्याम्पवेलले सन् १८३७ मा A Note on the Musical Insturments and Agricultural and other Instruments of the Nepalese लेखेर यो कार्यको शुभारम्भ गरेका हुन। त्यतिवेला यो शब्दको प्रचलन नभए पनि त्यससम्बन्धी कामको शुभारम्भ उनैले गरेका हुन्। यस प्रकारको अध्ययनलाई Ethnomusicology नामकरण गरिएको धेरै पछि मात्र भएको कुरा माथि उल्लेख भइसकेकोछ। डा. क्याम्पवेलले शुरु गरेको सङ्गीत अध्ययनलाई पछि धेरै सङ्गीत अध्येताहरुले अघि वढाए। यस प्रकारका अनेकौं सङ्गीतज्ञहरुमध्ये डा. ए.ए. बाके (१९५९), मेरिय हेल्फर (१९६५, १९७४), डा. क्यारोल टिंगी (१९९०, १९९४) र डा. जी. एम. वेग्नर (१९८६, १९८८), आदि सङ्गीत अध्येताहरुको नाम विशेषगरी लिन सकिन्छ। नेपाली सङ्गीततको सन्दर्भमा सर्वप्रथम NEPAL: Ethnomusicology (1965) शीर्षकको लेख प्रकाशित गर्ने श्रेय फ्रेन्च संगीतशास्त्री मेरिय हेल्फरलाई छ। लेखमा उनले नेपालमा 'जातीय सङ्गीतशास्त्रीय' अध्ययनको सम्भावनाबारे प्रकाश पारेकी छिन्। २००७ सालको क्रान्तिपछि नेपाली सङ्गीतमा पनि खोजी र अध्ययन-मनन गर्ने प्रवृत्तिहरु उदाउन थाले। वास्तवमा भन्ने हो भने यसै वेलादेखि नै नेपाली सङ्गीतमा राष्ट्रियता झल्कन थालेको हो। लोक सङ्गीतमा खोजी गर्ने केही विद्वानहरुमध्ये सत्यमोहन जोशी (२०१४), धर्मराज थापा (२०१६), लक्ष्मण लोहनी (२०२३) र कालीभक्त पन्त (२०२८) आदिको नाम लिन सकिन्छ।

'जातीय सङ्गीतशास्त्र' बारे संक्षेपमा भएपनि केही चर्चा गरौं। पाश्चात्य संगीत पद्धतिमा त्यहाँका अमर संगीतकारहरु (बाक, विथोभेन, मुत्सार्ट, आदि) का पाश्चात्य शास्त्रीयसंगीत पद्धतिका संगीत रचनाहरु बाहेकका परम्परागत संगीत वा कुनै जातिको सांस्कृतिक र ऐतिहासिक पृष्ठभूमि सहित समग्र रुपमा अध्ययन गरिएको सङ्गीतलाई 'जातीय संगीतशास्त्र' भन्न थालिएको हो। यस प्रकारको अध्ययन सर्वप्रथम कुन्स्त ज्यापले (१९३१) मा इन्डोनिसियाका विभिन्न जातिहरुको अध्ययन गरेर प्रारम्भ गरेका थिए। उनले Anthropology र Musicology को मिश्रण गराएर एउटा नयाँ रुप र आकार दिए। अर्को अर्थमा जातीय अध्ययन र संगीत Ethnic-Music को पछि ड्यास पनि लोप गराएर Ethnomusicology नामकरण गरे। पछि संगीत जगत्मा यही नाम प्रचलित हुँदै गयो। शास्त्रीय सङ्गीत बाहेक अमेरिकी जाति वा ल्याटिन अमेरिकाको संगीतलाई पनि जातीय सङ्गीतशास्त्र अन्तरगत समाविष्ट गरियो। अरवी संगीत, चिनीया संगीत, हिन्दु संगीत, ग्रीक संगीत, यहुदि संगीत, जापानी संगीत र दक्षिण अमेरिकी संगीत जातीय सङ्गीतशास्त्र अन्तरगत नै लिइन्छ। विश्वसंगीत कोशमा जातीय संगीत शास्त्र अध्ययन अन्तरगत नेपाली संगीतलाई पनि समेटिएको छ। डा. क्याम्पवेल र डा. ए.ए. बाके जस्ता नेपाली संगीत अध्येताहरुकै कृतिका आधारमा नेपालले उक्त विश्वकोशमा स्थान पाएको हुन सक्छ। डा. क्यारोल टिंगी (१९९०, १९९४) र डा. वेग्नरका (१९८६, १९८७, १९८८) प्रकाशित पुस्तकहरुले पनि ती कार्यमा सघाउ पुऱ्याएका छन्। नेपाली संगीत जगतकालागि यो एउटा सुखद लक्षण मान्नु पर्छ। जति जति नेपाल विश्वमा परिचित हुँदै जान्छ, त्यति त्यति विदेशी संगीत अन्वेषकहरु नेपाली संगीतको अध्ययनमा आकर्षित हुँदै जान्छन्। हालै मात्र फ्रान्सका फ्रान्वकले आफ्नो सम्पादनमा नेपाली संगीतलाई परिचित गर्न Himalayan Music State of the Art (1997) नामक पुस्तक पेरिसबाट प्रकाशित गरेका छन्। यसबाट पनि नेपाली संगीतमा 'जातीय संगीतशास्त्रीय' अध्ययनमा सघाउ पुऱ्याउने आशा लिन सकिन्छ।

नेपाली सङ्गीतमा गरिनु पर्ने कार्यहरु प्रशस्त छन्। अहिले जति खोज र अध्ययन भएको छ, त्यसकै आधारमा मात्र कुरा गर्ने हो भने सिङ्गो संगीत एकेडेमीले पनि नभ्याउने कार्यहरु गर्न बाँकी देखिन्छन् र ती सब कार्य सम्पादन गर्न एउटा दीर्घकालीन योजना र कार्यक्रमहरु देशले लागु गर्न अत्यावश्यक भइ सकेको अनुभव हुन्छ। नेपाली संगीत क्षेत्रमा 'जातीय संगीतशास्त्रीय' अध्ययन केही विदेशी संगीत शास्त्रीहरुले

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गरेपनि ती कार्य नेपाली संगीतशास्त्रीले गर्ने अवसर पाएका छैनन् । नेपाली संगीत जगत्मा परम्परादेखि गाउने, बजाउने र नाच्ने पेशा लिएर जीविकोपार्जन गर्ने लोक कलाकारहरु आज ज्यादै उपेक्षित र अमर्यादित रुपमा बाँच्न विवश छन् । तिनका कलाकृति र जीवन पद्दति बारे नेपालीलाई नै थाहा छैन भने विदेशीलाई के वास्ता ! नेपाल अधिराज्यभर जीविकोपार्जनकालागि ती कलाकारहरुले अत्यन्त दीनहीन अवस्थामा बाँच्नु परेको छ । ती लोककलाकारहरुको हितको लागि के उपाय अपनाइएको छ र तिनीहरुको कला-कौशलको संरक्षण र संवर्द्धनमा कसले ध्यान दिएको छ ? नेपाली संगीतका यस्ता अमूल्य निधि अब क्रमशः विलाउने अवस्थामा पुगिसकेका छन् । यसतर्फ हाम्रो ध्यान जानु आवश्यक भइ सकेको छ । यसैगरी अधिकांश जनजातिहरु, आदिवासी र दलित भनिएका जातिहरुको पनि आ-आफ्नै सांगीतिक परम्परा र पृष्ठभुमि रहेको छ । तिनीहरुको संगीत कला बारे जातीय संगीतशास्त्रीय अध्ययन अन्वेषणको कार्य शुरुगर्नु पर्ने अनिवार्यतालाई नकार्न सकिदैन ।

देशको संगीत कलालाई जोगाउने र जगेर्ना गर्ने कार्यमा प्रत्येक नेपालीले गम्भीरतासाथ सोच्नु पर्ने समय आइसके जस्तो लाग्छ । राष्ट्रका संगीतप्रेमी र संगीत कलाका पारखीहरुले मात्र होइन सम्बन्धित निकायहरुबाट पनि यसप्रति चासो देखाउनु पर्‍यो । राष्ट्रको संगीत कलाको जगेर्नाकालागि यस क्षेत्रका हामी सबैले सचेत भइ आ-आफ्नो क्षेत्रबाट योगदान पुर्‍याउन नसके पछि पछुताउनु बाहेक केही बाँकी रहने छैन । यसर्थ, परम्परागत पेशेवर कलाकार, जनजाति - आदिवासी र दलित जातिका, संगीतकला र उनीहरुको परम्परागत संगीतलाई बचाउने उपाय अवलम्बन गर्न ढिला भइ सकेको अनुभव हुन्छ ।

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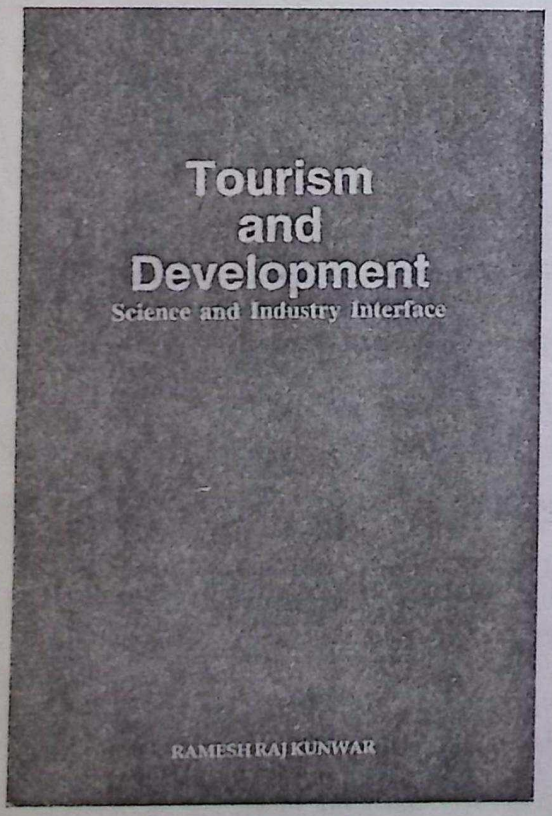
Book Review

Comprehensive and Analytical



Tourism and Development: Science and Industry Interface,
By Ramesh Raj Kunwar,
First Edition 1997
Published By Laxmi Kumari, Kathmandu
pp. i-vii, 231, Price: Rs. 350

For centuries, travelling was an obligation that arouse for three reasons: wars, trade and religion. Though travelling has a long history, it is only recently that people have travelled for pleasure or holiday making or with the idea of experiencing foreign cultures and people's way of life. It was in 1841 that Thomas Cook, the pioneer travel agent and father of modern tourism, sold the first day trip in Brighton in England, and it was only after the second World War that mass tourism developed as a great movement of the future. This new kind of outbound international tourism spread due to fast and safe means of transport facilities. The important thing is no longer the journey itself but what the tourists do once they reach at the destinations. In the present day global context, many types of tourism and tourists are identified on the basis of the prime interest and motive of the tourist. At the time when mass tourism bloomed in the 1960's, it was often under the spell of experiencing alien cultures. The tourists visiting the pyramids of Egypt for example, will learn something about the pyramids as a result of their visit. But most tourists (98%) climb the Eiffel Tower more for the visual pleasure than wanting to know the history of its construction, etc. Each type has its own particular demand and impact on tourism.

No doubt, tourism by now has boomed as people's industry-run by the people for the people having prospective economic alternative for revenue, substantial foreign exchange earnings and jobs. Tourism industry has

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been known as, 'smokeless industry' and the proverbial 'golden goose laying golden eggs'.

For the developing country like Nepal, tourism is supposed to be the most important sector of the economy after agriculture and water resources to trigger off the country's development. Since it plays a vital role in the national economy and socio-economic activities of the people, the importance of tourism hardly needs any elaboration, moreover Nepal is no longer the 'forbidden land' to the foreigners. Nepal's immense tourism potential lies in its wealth of natural diversity, beauty, age old civilization and diverse people.

The book under review by Ramesh Raj Kunwar entitled "Tourism and Development: Science and Industry Interface" has been issued at the right movement. A combination of theory and service is what this book is all about. Kunwar's book that contains in totality, a comprehensive outlook and analysis of international tourism and its theory, is the first of its kind to be found in the history of tourism literature in Nepal. The book can be useful to the planners, professionals, critics, tourism experts and enthusiasts, businessmen and general public alike. The author has embarked upon the theoretical and conceptual development of international tourism with the elaborate yet selective analysis of meaning, definition, scope, nature and types, etc. of tourism that are of paramount importance.

Kunwar is a prominent Anthropologist who is equally well-versed in tourism. In this publication, the author infuses his profound understanding of the very concept of tourism into the field of tourism in Nepal. This is an attempt to give an insight into the proper theoretical outlook of tourism if it is to be implemented both as a science and an industry. The book, therefore, provides ample ground for the mosaic readings of tourism from both angles. For this reason, the author accentuates 'the knowledge based platform', considered one of the four major platforms for the promotion and development of tourism, in this book.

The book covers a wide area and development of tourism known so far. The book can be classified into two parts - one part dealing with the conceptual aspect of the international tourism and the overall interrelatedness of tourism with nature culture and people. The other part deals with impacts of tourism as an industry on the socio-cultural and environmental aspects.

The book contains nine chapters all of which are carefully weaved into an organic unity that bespeaks the importance of all aspects of tourism. The chapter one includes introduction, definition, nature and scope of tourism, proto-tourism, tourist typology and tourism typology. The author has tried to avoid tidy definitions of tourism in favour of theoretical explanations. He develops the interpretation through the framework of historical development of tourism both as a science and an industry. In the subsequent chapters, viz. chapter two, three and four, the author freely dwells upon the smooth presentation of various kinds of tourism concepts and contrasting features of Anthropology of Tourism, Cultural tourism, Eco-tourism, Alternative tourism, Sustainable tourism, Rural, Domestic, Village, Inner-city and Pilgrimage tourism, etc. The growing concern about the harmful effects of tourism on the environment, socio-economic systems and cultural values of destination areas, have preoccupied

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tourism professionals and policy analysts to search for different approaches for tourism development.

The chapter five seems to be useful for Nepal where the scientifically developed government agenda for tourism sector is highly lacking. This chapter entirely relates to the service aspect of tourism dealing with hospitality, hotels, resorts, transportation, guide, information, and travel agencies, etc.

While the chapter six describes one and the only type of tourism concept called 'pilgrimage tourism' based on religion, culture, history, and myth, etc. the chapter seven again does focus on sex tourism. However, sex-tourism in the poor countries is no longer a blessing.

In the chapter eight, very conspicuously, the author describes the effects and impacts of tourism on natural environment, cultural environment and socio-cultural environment. He presents that the effects and impacts loom up in nature, culture and every day activities in the form of environmental degradation, diffusion, commercialization, museumification, commodization, euphoria, apathy, antagonism, disillusion, neo-colonialism, stronger guest and weaker host, and cocacolization of physical products, cultural drift, identity crisis, assimilation, aculturization, westernization, cultural prostitution, pseudo-native culture and conflict, etc. These are certain modernizing influences which are stimulated by the cross-cultural contact between the developing and the developed countries.

This, book covers a fairly wide aspects of tourism and its global characteristics. It's chief contribution lies in synthesizing a vast wealth of sources and in maintaining a proper understanding of the theoretical aspect of tourism for the success of service industry.

The chapter nine does not fill the glaring lack - the lack of proper implementation of concept of tourism as an industry. Unfortunately, the author seems to be lacking in awareness of the present scenario of tourism in Nepal. It would have been worthwhile if he had highlighted some concept on tourism policy implementation. The author has also refrained himself from commenting on the plans and policies of the Nepali government. There are many potential areas to exploit and many programmes to implement for tapping tourism. The current publicity activities and policy prospective of the government are misleading and cumbersome. The author does not induce critical facts to buttress up tourism scenario of Nepal, hence, the chapter nine produces no definitive result.

The book seems to be a hasty preparation lacking assiduity. Some ideas are inconsistent and incoherent, and does not flow as naturally as they ought to be. The press work too, seems to be unceremonious and lacked artistry. However, there is no denying of the fact that the book will serve as an eye-opener to the Nepali intelligentsia and to the students of different levels.

For the present, this book is a welcome contribution to the tourism literature with the vista of its own enduring value and promising future. However, theoretically, this book will shine as a repertoire of relevant information and an engaging product of the author.

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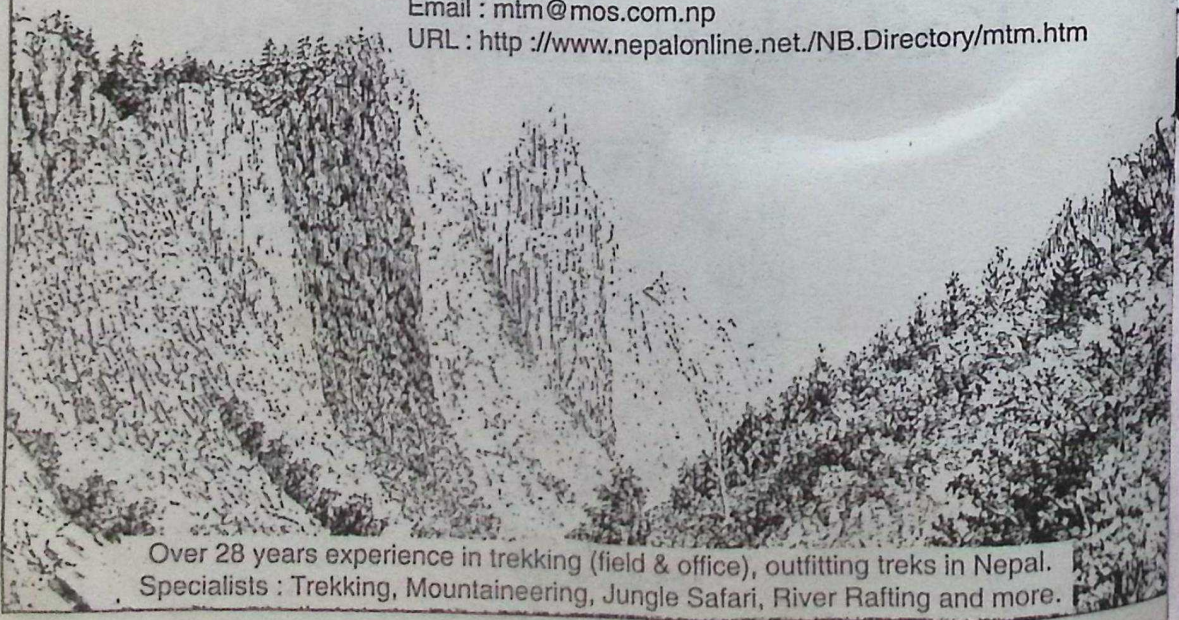

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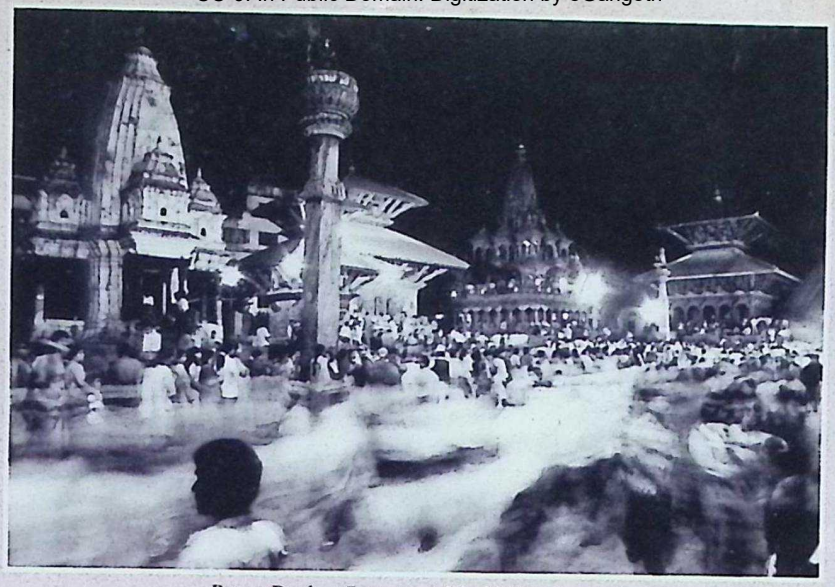

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